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THE DISSONANT DESIGN: JOHN FORD AND THE ART OF TRAGEDY

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. . . We regarded the drama and penetrated the tumultuous world of it motives and yet felt as though what was passing before us was merely a symbolic image, whose deepest meaning we almost divined and which we longed to tear away in order to reveal the original image behind it. The intense clarity of the image failed to satisfy us, for it seemed to hide as much as it revealed; and while it seemed to invite us to pierce the veil and examine the mystery behind it, its luminous concreteness nevertheless held the eye entranced and kept it from probing deeper.

No one who has not experienced the need to look and at the same time to go beyond that look will understand how clearly these two processes are associated for the understanding of tragic myth. Yet the truly sensitive spectator will bear me out that of all the strange effects of tragedy this double claim is the most peculiar. If we can project this phenomenon from the spectator onto the tragic artist, we shall understand the genesis of tragic myth. It shares with the Apollonian the strong delight in illusion and contemplation, and yet it denies that delight, finding an even higher satisfaction in the annihilation of concrete semblances. At first blush the tragic myth appears as an epic event having to do with the glorification of the hero and his struggles. Yet how are we to account for the fact that the hero's sufferings, his most painful dilemmas - all the ugly, discordant things . . . are depicted again and again with such relish . . . unless we assume that these representations engender a higher kind of delight?

Friedrich Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy

First of all, what is a tragedy? The problem of defining "the tragic" has greatly occupied both literary historians and writers themselves, although no formula has ever received universal agreement. Without claiming to solve a problem that so many thinkers hesitate over, at least we can proceed by comparison and try to see, for example, how tragedy differs from drama or melodrama. This is what seems to me the difference: the forces confronting each other in tragedy are equally legitimate, equally justified. In melodramas or dramas, on the other hand, only one force is legitimate. In other words, tragedy is ambiguous and drama simple-minded. In the former, each force is at the same time both good and bad. In the latter, one is good and the other evil . . . Antigone is right, but Creon is not wrong . . . Melodrama could thus be summed up by saying: "Only one is just and justifiable," while the perfect tragic formula would be: "All can be justified, no one is just." . . .

Albert Camus, On the Future of Tragedy

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: A PROPER PERSPECTIVE

. . . To adventure into that wilderness is for the ordinary reader an ordeal, an upsetting experience which plies him with questions, harries him with doubts, alternately delights and vexes him with pleasures and pains. For we are apt to forget, reading, as we tend to do, only the masterpieces of a bygone age how great a power the body of a literature possesses to impose itself: how it will not suffer itself to be read passively, but takes us and reads us: flouts our preconceptions; questions principles which we had got into the habit of taking for granted, and, in fact, splits us into two parts as we read, making us, even as we enjoy, yield our ground or stick to our guns . . .¹

No one familiar with the power of literature to intimidate or enthrall its infinite variety of "ordinary readers" can avoid noting the congenital impulse of critics to instruct and correct the unformed, improperly conceived attitudes of their unseen audience. We will always have aggressiveness and passivity, masters and disciples. But there is, and always has been, a more informed and intelligent kind of teacher and pupil, a more generous and considerate collaboration in the explication of a literary text. The best sort of literary criticism represents an artful and necessary mediation between complex, often conflicting allegiances: the intention of the author and the intelligence of the reader; the familiarity of the narrative or theme and its sometimes subtle and elusive articulation by the artist; the paradigmatic author and his less accessible contemporaries; the reassurance of an original viewpoint stated with certainty and the equal validity of doubt in unanswered or unanswerable questions. No reader in turn can afford to be less than totally receptive to what Cleanth Brooks has termed the "disruptive" function of literature,² to be always inquisitive and sceptical to unitary, exclusive interpretations of meaning and form.

The awareness of the process of literature, the subtlety and persuasiveness with which it intrudes upon our complacency, its remarkable capacity to ask more questions than it answers and to force us to earn the truths we seek - all these require the shared, complementary knowledge of "Reader" and "reader."

The remarks quoted above were addressed by Virginia Woolf to what she continually referred to as the "common reader," often uneducated and unperceptive in the appreciation of literature, but nevertheless possessed of a laudable "instinct to create for himself," whose energies deserve "some say in the final distribution of poetical honours."³ More particularly, she was concerned with the proper appreciation and understanding of Shakespeare's contemporaries in the theater, "lesser Elizabethans,"⁴ and her remarks remain an uncommonly sensible and compassionate act of accommodation to a neglected, sometimes misunderstood period in the development of English literature in general and the drama in particular. Above all, she instinctively recognized the responsibility of the reader to engage resolutely "the swarm and variety of the Elizabethan dramatists" and at the same time sympathized with the difficulty of the task in seeing "the extraordinary discrepancy between the Elizabethan view of reality and our own."⁵

The purpose of the present study is to respond to the implications of what Virginia Woolf said by making the process of critical reading the business of criticism. It is an exercise in the responsible and responsive interpretation of a "lesser Elizabethan," one who claimed the attention of Mrs. Woolf herself,⁶ John Ford. No extensive historical speculation or ideological synthesis is intended, though the primary

purpose of investigating the correspondences and transformations within the Fordian canon of tragedies is made more persuasive and intelligible if we examine some preliminary considerations. These prefatory remarks are concerned with the peculiarly subversive power noted above by Mrs. Woolf, the capacity of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama to exploit parallel and contradictory effects in the reader's sensibility, the special dispensation it grants to elements of alienation, paradox, multiple perspective, and discontinuity through the reciprocal relationship of theme and form. Before this complex phenomenon is examined in the context of the drama itself, however, it is important to discuss the more comprehensive cultural background in which that drama was conceived.

There is plenty of respectable evidence to illustrate convincingly that the age in which Renaissance dramatists in England were the most prolific and successful both artistically and economically was also a period of tremendous political and social upheaval,⁷ of increasing metaphysical and scientific scepticism,⁸ and of the noticeable congruence between such prevailing ideology and that most public of all forms of literary expression.⁹ This fact, however, has only peripheral importance here; what is of more interest (and worth some discussion, however brief) is the relationship between the arts themselves, and how such a relationship enables us to understand more clearly the singular effect of the drama noted above. The most influential and inclusive term to describe the aesthetics of verbal, aural, and visual art in the last half of the sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth centuries is mannerism.¹⁰ Seen by one critic as "perhaps the richest and most diverse period in the whole history of European painting,"¹¹ mannerism ultimately embraced

a wide variety of creative activity and its impact was interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, and cosmopolitan. It was, to use a distinction made by Norman Rabkin, "a mode of vision, not an ideology,"¹² and its singular way of seeing transformed the artistic vocabulary of the Renaissance. This stylistic revolution was not only reflected in certain well-defined techniques characteristic of the various disciplines (foreshortening and serpentine figures in painting; chromaticism, dissonance, and suspension¹³ in music, especially the madrigal; the metaphysical conceit in poetry) but through more generally inclusive principles as well: the complex, often unsettling effects of disproportion, disequilibrium, tension, indetermination,¹⁴ alienation,¹⁵ and paradox.¹⁶ The last-named phenomenon is particularly important and can be expressed in several ways, all of which have some relevance to this study: the vision of the paradoxist is always dialectical,¹⁷ invariably involved in the exploitation, not the reconciliation of opposing points of view, both visual and verbal; it is anti-empirical and anti-monist, since it makes us question rather than re-affirm the "truth" we have "seen," and its ubiquitous function is always "an oblique criticism of absolute judgment or absolute convention";¹⁸ it is potentially subversive and nihilistic, but its apparent self-contradictions may yet be true¹⁹ as its relativistic assumptions become "absolute"; it is the perfect rhetorical and symbolic expression for curiosity and intense speculation, and can ultimately express mystery, but not resolve it "logically"; reduced to its simplest syntactical form, it puts forth the proposition that "that which is, both is and is not"; it is, finally, the "purest and most striking expression"²⁰ of the mannerist era.

It would be a serious error to regard the paradoxical technique as simply an ingenious bravura exercise, a mere jeu d'esprit. The formal articulation, the compositional elements, are not experiments in bizarre or playful seductions in perspective and symmetry; they rather express a more intricate and profound commentary on the discrepancy between what the work of art purportedly "represents" and what we in fact want to see:

. . . We live in a world which though it makes sense to our intuitive consciousness cannot be reduced to sense, and which though palpably coherent is always more complicated than the best of our analytic descriptions can say . . .

. . . We demand . . . artifice . . . for the simple reason that we see the objective world in the same way, focused through a subjective vision and projected onto a subjective consciousness. Our minds tell us that the world is manifold, perhaps chaotic, but we can never escape from the unitary impression formed by our subjectivity; and the work of art, subjectivity incarnate, pleases and instructs by imitating that impression.

. . . In the objective world we view we have a unitary impression of a manifold reality; inevitably rationalizing our sense of unity, we constantly attempt to reduce experience to formulated law, to understand the order we feel intuitively in verbal terms. We believe that the world makes sense and we try to express that sense; yet we know that the world consistently eludes the sense to which we reduce it . . .²¹

Professor Rabkin's remarks seem, in the context of this study, extremely important: he recognizes the spectator's complicity in the perception and comprehension of the work of art; he is not afraid to suggest that anyone who encounters a work of art has the capacity to impose illusions, as well as be manipulated by them; he sees feelingly that Hamlet's problem within Elsinore is the refractory image of the problem we confront in watching Shakespeare's play. It is this kind of working hypothesis which best enables us to appreciate the paradoxical function

of mannerist art, its power to amuse and disturb, its attempt to achieve a hypertensive balance when "the logic of the structure does not coincide with the structural elements."²² No better "objective correlative" exists for that uncommon reader who believes, with Schlegel, that "you really would be sorry if your wishes came true and you were able to say that the whole world had become completely intelligible."²³

If we apply this method of inquiry to the drama of the Elizabethan and Jacobean period, some noticeable correspondences result. From its earliest origins, the English stage was, in its theatrical conventions and thematic concerns, preoccupied with the problems of hybridization and heterogeneity: the drama utilized elements of Greek and Roman characterization and structure, the rituals and symbols of Christianity, the popular celebrations and entertainments of the native tradition.²⁴ The fusion of ludus and homily, morality and farce, crucifixion and resurrection, allegory and history, the Vice and the Devil, the eternal "truths" of the Bible and the improvised fancies of amateur actors, the redemption of Mankind and the congenital tragedy of Everyman, the contemporaneous and the timeless - all these become important and fundamental suppositions in understanding the ambivalent texture of the drama before Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

In Shakespearean tragedy and its legacy, this critical problem does not disappear, it only is defined in more sophisticated terms:

Thus we are left at last with an idea showing two sides or aspects which we can neither separate nor reconcile. The whole order against which the individual part shows itself powerless seems to be animated by a passion for perfection: we cannot otherwise explain its behavior toward evil. Yet it appears to engender this

evil within itself, and in its effort to overcome and expel it it is agonized with pain, and driven to mutilate its own substance and to lose not only evil but priceless good. That this idea, though very different from the idea of a blank fate, is no solution of the riddle of life is obvious; but why should we expect it to be such a solution? Shakespeare was not attempting to justify the ways of God to men, or to show the universe as a Divine Comedy. He was writing tragedy, and tragedy would not be tragedy if it were not a painful mystery . . . We remain confronted with the inexplicable fact, or the no less inexplicable appearance, of a world travelling for perfection, but bringing to birth, together with glorious good, an evil which it is able to overcome only by self-torture and self-waste.²⁵

Thus ends Bradley's first lecture, certainly no triumph of a facile, Edwardian optimism. He makes every play a "problem" play, but that problem has much too intimate and abrasive an attraction to the audience to be dismissed easily: Coriolanus is a "thing of blood" with a mother problem, whose heroic rescue of Rome is the occasion for his most bitter humiliation as he cannot practice the "humility" of the politic man; Antony is the aged playboy too sensually corrupted to fight, yet he is the heir of Hercules and the apostrophied colossus, that "other" Antony of Cleopatra's imagination; Brutus and Macbeth both commit the foul act of usurpation and assassination, yet Brutus is "the noblest Roman of them all" while the former Thane of Cawdor is reviled as a "dead butcher"; Yorick's skull mirrors Hamlet's own "Divine Comedy" in the graveyard, his own intensive preoccupation with failure and mortality, accompanied both by Ophelia's "Maimed Rites" and the jest of clowns.

These examples are familiar, but their little world is made cunningly. The "lesser Elizabethans" noted by Virginia Woolf are neither so familiar, nor is their dramaturgic vision as attractive to the "common reader," but they provide more compensation for close study

than some have thought and there are many complex problems worthy of consideration: the curious and often frightening nature of marriage and romantic love in The Maid's Tragedy; Bosola's "dual" personality as accomplished assassin who possesses remarkable sympathy for his victim in The Duchess of Malki; the idea of "service" as seen by Beatrice-Joanna and De Flores in The Changeling; ²⁶ the relationship between acting on the stage and political action in The Roman Actor; Livia's continence and indulgence in Women Beware Women; the comic and horrific effects of vengeance and sadism in The Revenger's Tragedy. In order to accomplish this task and insure that our efforts assume some measure of congeniality and necessity, we have to take the responsibility of reader-spectator seriously. This can best be achieved by devoting some attention to the dramaturgic devices which define their essentially theatrical nature: characterization, genre, visual and verbal imagery.

The protagonists who appear on the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage are invariably conventional abstractions of recognizable personae or types, the stylized personifications of "humors," often severely restricted in what they say or do. They are only as "real" as their author's creative dispensation allows; he mediates between a conventional narrative and its unconventional interpretation and his audience in turn tries to subordinate the sense of plausibility to a willing suspension of disbelief. The attempt to make a particular character conform to a logical, causal behavioral process and the need to create an isolated moment of particular dramatic effectiveness often determines the way the spectator discriminates (not always successfully) between poetic justice and aesthetic excitement. As defined by Madeleine Doran, the demanding

art of characterization for the Renaissance dramatist can be conceived as follows: the problem of individuality vs. typicality; the problem of repetitive form, or consistency; the problem of static vs. dynamic, or developing, character; the problem of motivation.²⁷ These demands seem particularly acute in any consideration of the work of Beaumont and Fletcher, where "this shifting of the point of view . . . makes a continuing response to the characters impossible. We respond to the relationships between them in a given situation, but the response does not depend on our having looked at these characters in the same preceding scenes. It is a response to the emotion itself . . . The response which (the) play demands is not really one response but a series of different responses to shifting relationships between the characters."²⁸ Such a "protean"²⁹ pattern is typically mannerist, inevitably paradoxical, a common characteristic of the Jacobean theatre:

. . . Thus occurs a dissociation of dramatic from moral relevance. Nor does the violence of the characters mean that any emotion is intimately or necessarily identified with the character who displays the emotion; the characters are "depersonalized" in so far as they are manipulated for the sake of the intrigue in which they are engaged. Consequently a consuming emotion may play through a character at a certain instant but may not seem to belong personally to that character, who behaves as an instrument to convey a dramatic effect. The Jacobean playwright used this sort of "occasionalism" in his dramas: the passion may be furious while the character may be rather mechanically possessed by it, as if from without. And moral values are exploited in the interest of dramatic shock . . .³⁰

The relationship between tragic and comic elements is another illustration of the way in which Jacobean drama exploits mutually contradictory or dissimilar effects. We are not here concerned with tragicomedy sui generis, a special kind of play which shows "the danger

but not the death."³¹ Rather, the intention is to see how, in a play which is concerned with both "dangers" and "deaths," the comic tone is often present, in a way which both detracts from, and comments on, the more "serious" action. What ordinarily constitutes the satiric tone of a "subplot" is more often than not a subtle variation on a central theme: the entertainment of madmen at Beatrice-Joanna's wedding in The Changing; Vindice's clever yet horrific contrivances of death in The Revenger's Tragedy; Flamineo's fondness for play-acting and charade in The White Devil;³² the game of chess in Women Beware Women; Evadne's wedding-night in The Maid's Tragedy. "Comedy" in these instances seems less a matter of "relief" than uneasiness, a troubled distortion of the audience's ability in judging its own responses rather than a means by which its comfortable detachment from the play is assured. As characterization frequently reveals the unsettling discrepancy between behavior and circumstance, expectation and fact, so does genre express the disturbed balance, the inversions and distortions of comedy and tragedy "when these two elements . . . do not coalesce, they coexist: one constantly repels the other, they show each other up, criticise and deny one another."³³

Finally, the symbolism of stagecraft and the metaphors of poetic speech reinforce the equivocal perceptions cultivated by the Jacobean play. Certainly Othello's handkerchief is the perfect dramaturgic expression of the absolutes of love and hate which dominate his temperament; it emblemizes the inseparability of devotion and jealousy, and its loss and subsequent discovery parallels Othello's terrible error and belated recognition of guilt. In the same way, the severed finger of

Piracquo symbolizes (ring and all) the dismembered affections of Beatrice-Joanna who must both conceal and ultimately succumb to the desires of De Flores, and his willingness to be her hired assassin is in itself a perverted form of loyalty, whose proof of affections and "service" is imaged in murder and mutilation. If these powerful suggestions are transferred to a verbal context, the effect is equally compelling. The use of animal imagery in The White Devil intimates that the characters possess the insidious powers of snakes and spiders to entrap and destroy their prey, yet the reduction of human feeling and intelligence to such an inhuman form of behavior is itself at the same time supremely denigrating, the perfect annihilation of virtue and compassion by an evil which ultimately consumes itself. The imagery of food and finance in Women Beware Women implies both an ordered world of nourishment and contentment, but its sensual and mercantile "appetites" extend to the human marketplace where romantic passion is ignoble transformed into the amoral selling of human flesh. It is in the conscious exploration of these verbal and visual ambiguities, the persistent contradictions which words and objects confer upon our experience of the play, that the Jacobean dramatist achieves a mannerist perspective.

Beyond a few scattered details it does not seem likely that we shall ever know anything of Ford's life and personality outside his works. Of the characters of his plays we can learn much, of their creator very little . . . Nothing is known to us of the life of Ford while he was writing the works for which he is now famous.³⁴

If Ford's life resists close scrutiny, his works invite detailed

critical examination and interpretation. He is easily the most noteworthy dramatist of the Caroline period and has provoked a remarkably diverse reaction among critical readers. This plurality of opinion has tended to reinforce, however, rather than dissipate the atmosphere of mystery and paradox which surrounds his dramatic achievement. The quantity of extant plays attributed to him with certainty is small when compared to the output of his contemporaries and to the amount of critical attention devoted to his own works. Such critical opinion varies in quality: some superficial and hasty judgments are unwarranted and misleading; some are simply too narrow in scope. Most commentators have a definite point of view concerning Ford's status as a dramatist, but not all are willing to undertake a careful consideration of his plays. Whether Ford's stature is merited or not, the reasons behind the intensity of response to his work are often inconsistent and unclear. To see Ford through the eyes of others is simply a reminder that a serious, comprehensive reevaluation of his plays is always welcome. We can extend Ford's appeal beyond the exclusive interests of the antiquarian and the polemicist if we recognize the complex, often elusive effects of plays designed to be experienced in the theater. It is ironic and revealing that the man whom Robert Ornstein has termed "the last dramatist to make an original and significant contribution to early seventeenth-century tragedy"³⁵ is still without a modern edition of his complete works.³⁶

If the divergence in critical opinion is fundamental, so is its source. Few would dispute Swinburne's observation that "the strength and intensity of (Ford's) genius require a tragic soil to flourish in, in air of tragedy to breathe."³⁷ Nevertheless, the special nature of

Fordian tragedy, its unique content and structure, is an unresolved issue and the problem has its roots in the beginning of the nineteenth century. The critical writings of Lamb and Hazlitt represent a pioneering effort to arouse interest in the Jacobean dramatists, but their remarks on Ford are a cogent illustration of why he is able to arouse conflicting impressions and cultivate different tastes. Both Lamb and Hazlitt were attracted to the same characters and the same plays - Giovanni and Annabella in 'Tis Pity She's a Whore and Calantha in The Broken Heart. The two critics approach the plays by combining moral and aesthetic judgments and the distinctions they make between means and ends, process and effect, are often determined solely by their enthusiasm (which varies markedly) for Ford's achievement.

Lamb regarded The Broken Heart highly: ". . . I do not know where to find, in any play, a catastrophe so grand, so solemn, and so surprising as in this . . . Ford was of the first order of poets. He sought for sublimity, not by parcels, in metaphor or public images,³⁸ but directly where she has her full residence in the heart of man - in the actions and sufferings of the greatest minds."³⁹ The aesthetic pleasure in observing Calantha's heroic ordeal has the exalted aura of a religious rite, the transcendence of pain and death. The play expresses for Lamb not only the high design of Milton's poetry but also "almost bears us in imagination to Calvary and the Cross."⁴⁰ The association is intriguing and complex. Ford's "sublimity" is not purely theatrical; Lamb's remarks allude specifically to New Testament Christology and its Miltonic expression. What might seem impressive stagecraft is also morally uplifting; from Lamb's point of view, no

audience can or should avoid the implicit homily. No distinction is made (and perhaps none was intended) between what the play teaches and how it is conceived as dramatic structure; the brevity of Lamb's analysis provides only the suggestion of a tenuous relationship between idea and form. He invites the reader to marvel at Ford's gift in expressing powerful emotions, but at the same time he does not fail to imply that the catharsis is related to sound ethical doctrine. Ford teaches and beguiles; his drama performs the classic dual function of all great art: to be sweet and useful, to please and instruct. Thus even the incestuous love of 'Tis Pity "shows hints of an improvable greatness in the lowest descents and degradations of our nature."⁴¹ We can only guess at the source of Lamb's moral enlightenment, but we can at least see clearly the earnestness of his efforts to see positive ethical implications in a story of incest which has made Ford easily susceptible to charges of sensationalism and bad taste.

Hazlitt expresses the same dual perspective of aesthetic and moral appreciation but with many more negative responses. He cannot avoid criticizing what Lamb can only praise. Hazlitt objects to the incest story of 'Tis Pity but admits that "the repulsiveness of the story is what gives it its critical interest,"⁴² an obvious reversal of Lamb's position. Hazlitt stresses what he considers to be Ford's "artificial elaborateness."⁴³ He too focuses interest on Calantha in The Broken Heart, but sees her behavior as a violation of "probability and decorum."⁴⁴ What seemed to Lamb the paradigm of dramatic illusion - Calantha's reaction to the multiple deaths in Act V - is only in Hazlitt's eyes "prosaic" and "indifferent."⁴⁵ Ford's solemn and stoic

ritual becomes the opposite of mimesis; his dramaturgy does not imitate life, it only falsifies and distorts human behavior. Hazlitt sees Ford's procedure as deliberate and like Lamb, he cannot resist juxtaposing moral and aesthetic judgment:

. . . I do not find much other power in the author . . . than of playing with edged tools, and knowing the use of poisoned weapons . . . They are merely exercises of style and effusions of wire-drawn sentiment. Where they have not the sting of illicit passion, they are quite pointless, and seem painted as gauze, or spin of cobwebs . . .⁴⁶

What seemed compelling and vibrant to Lamb is meretricious and immoral to Hazlitt. What paradoxically unites these opposing views is the unwillingness or incapability of either critic to make distinctions between form and theme. If Ford's technique is labored and oblique to Hazlitt, it is also inspired by playing with fire, "the sting of illicit passion." If Ford's plays are unacceptable as dramatic illusion and lose their effectiveness in the theatre, they also fail through ethical negativism:

. . . There is too much of scholastic subtlety, an innate perversity of understanding or predominance of will, which either seeks the irritation of inadmissible subjects, or to stimulate its own faculties by taking the most barren and making something out of nothing, in a spirit of contradiction. He does not draw along with the reader: he does not work upon our sympathy, but on our antipathy or our indifference. . .⁴⁷

Recent criticism of Ford has provided its own "spirit of contradiction"; while its approach is more sophisticated and its explication of the plays more detailed, it follows the dialectic of Lamb and Hazlitt. "Decadence" is a word often used to describe Jacobean drama in general and Ford's drama in particular, and its dual function among contemporary

views of Ford reinforces the persistent diversity of opinion about him.⁴⁸ Those critics who see Ford's tragedies as morally objectionable have naturally concentrated on (1) the preoccupation with adultery, incest, and exceptionally violent behavior; (2) protagonists who seem to be unregenerate and morally culpable; (3) the absence of a normative standard of values by which the play implicitly fails to condemn the outrages it allegedly portrays.⁴⁹ "Decadence," however, can also mean what L. G. Salingar has termed "the empty, sweeping gestures of the verse, the straining and blurring of emotions."⁵⁰ Indeed, a good deal of attention has been focused on what is felt to be the weakening of dramatic structure in the Jacobean and Caroline periods: the neglect or misuse of formal elements.⁵¹ The problem can be formulated in several ways: (1) the protagonists lack stature and plausibility because their behavior often seems inconsistent and improperly or insufficiently motivated. Their emotions and actions seem at times absurd and their rhetoric un-persuasive, diffuse and formulaic. (2) There is too little attention to cohesive and coherent plot structure: the action is either disjointed or illogical. Multiple plots do not reinforce each other and subordinate action often mysteriously disappears as the play progresses. (3) The relationship between serious and comic elements is ambiguous and at times confusing.

The above discussion does not resolve the impasse caused by the conflicting views of Lamb and Hazlitt. What it does show, however, is the reciprocal relationship between appreciation of form and moral: the two perspectives mutually reinforce each other and enable one to see how easily the "truth" represented on stage is susceptible to more

than one interpretation. Every modern Hazlitt has his Lamb and it is often easier to see a play in both positive and negative aspects rather than subscribe to criteria which make the play conform to an exclusive and perhaps narrow perspective. What may seem diluted pathos⁵² can also be interpreted as restrained, dignified emotion. Ford's characters have been viewed as unusually submissive to fate⁵³ or as models of endurance through suffering whose quiet passion proves that dying well is the best excuse for living.⁵⁴ They may be praised and blamed for grief which comes too sudden or too late, for fury unleashed which cannot overcome the evil coercing it or which inadvertently destroys the good it seeks to save. These central protagonists seem often exaggerated in thought and action because their antagonists give them little means to test their courage and strength. Furthermore, they are seen variously as noble victims of flawed, misplaced passion or half-intelligent creatures of an ignorant shadow-world, defeated from the start by their creator's unwillingness to provide them a full measure of humanity and plausibility.

If we follow carefully the implications of this point of view, we discover why Camus felt tragedy was ambiguous and melodrama simple-minded. Giovanni can be a willing and willful sophist to satisfy his lust,⁵⁵ but his impassioned attempts to transcend an impassable barrier seem more admirable than the petty and deceitful maneuvers of the underlings surrounding him. Perkin Warbeck is an impostor who is also guilty of self-deception, but his failure as would-be king seems to be the source of whatever sympathy and compassion one feels for him.⁵⁶ To reverse the equation, Orgilus' thwarted passion for Penthea may justify his revenge, but the spectator of the tragedy is bound to have mixed

feelings for a man who kills his helpless victim strapped in a chair (Ithocles) and whose desire for blood destroys the hopes and ultimately the life of the innocent Calantha. This doubleness of perspective is not necessarily a delusion: two selves can for the sake of dramatic illusion inhabit the same body as well as maintain these personae in real life. What constitutes the necessary perspective for judging and understanding the protagonists in Ford's tragedies is ultimately a question to be asked by both his critics and defenders: Has Ford created viable and compelling characters whose truth to life, consistency and decorum contribute towards defining the tragic world they inhabit, however complex?⁵⁷

Considerations of plot and genre are equally valuable in assessing Ford's tragedies and involve the same plural responses as characterization. Examination of dramatic structure reinforces the suggestions mentioned previously. The reader-spectator may find it difficult to decide whether Ford's virtue or vice lies in the reliance on emotion rather than action, his concentration on scenes of great intensity rather than on tight pacing in conformity with the insistent demands of the story. A comparable musical analogy is the difference between the great vocal scenas of opera seria and bel canto musical theatre, as opposed to the inexorable demands and carefully balanced rhythms of plot in such dissimilar works as The Marriage of Figaro and Othello. The "experience" of these operas depends on whether the audience's crucial emotions, the most direct and forceful impact of the stage, correlate with moments which detract from, or collaborate with, the sequence of events: the difference between counterpointing and counteracting is obviously

important. The "story" in Ford is, properly defined, the examination of an emotional process, not the solution or reversal of situation to an unresolved problem. In fact, the distinction noted by R. J. Kaufmann between problem and situation goes a long way toward explaining the reasons for the differing interpretations of Fordian dramatic structure.⁵⁸ A situation has no remedy; a problem has a solution. In typical Fordian situations, characters undertake actions that their personalities make impossible to fulfill. Stasis becomes more important than movement. The fundamental cleavage between what a character is and what he must do to define himself according to the demands of a particular situation is of more compelling interest than what actually happens. What Clifford Leech has called "the movement towards the moment of stillness"⁵⁹ is reminiscent of a crucial epiphany in Joyce's Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man: Stephen Daedalus may never have read or seen a Ford play, but his general remarks on tragedy have a decided relevance to what the audience sees as objective correlative for its feelings in moments of greatest intensity:

The tragic emotion, in fact, is a face looking two ways, towards terror and towards pity, both of which are phases of it. You see I use the word arrest. I mean that the tragic emotion is static. Or rather the dramatic emotion. The feelings excited by improper art are kinetic, desire or loathing. Desire urges us to possess, to go to something; loathing urges us to abandon, to go from something. These are kinetic emotions . . . The esthetic emotion is therefore static. The mind is arrested and raised above desire and loathing.⁶⁰

What Hazlitt viewed as Ford's "indifference" to an audience can also be construed as a refusal to cater to its most superficial and

remarkably subtle and sensitive as long as it was confined to the realm of the abstract. Upon contact with the grit and harshness of reality, the actual "facts" of Stephen's experience, the theory loses credibility. Thus Ford's ability to portray exalted yet isolated episodes of heightened feeling also raises considerable doubts as to whether a unified, coherent dramatic structure is possible. "Reality" is not only what we theorize or imagine about Ford's art, but also what we see on stage. While Ford may have avoided for the most part the dangers of what Dryden called "a perplexed and confusing mass of accidents,"⁶¹ he does not always resolve satisfactorily certain intricacies and blind spots in his stories, some of which occur more than once.

The fragmentation of plot and the stagnation of movement offer another, more negative alternative in interpreting the plays. Thus each Fordian tragedy begins with a potentially serious dilemma which ultimately becomes irremediable. Caraffa's unfortunate marriage and Fernando's hopeless infatuation in Love's Sacrifice, the love of Giovanni and Annabella in 'Tis Pity She's a Whore, the frustrated passion of Orgilus for Penthea in The Broken Heart, and the imposture of Perkin Warbeck - all these situations begin as insuperable obstacles and all end hopelessly in death. This causes the plays to lose elements of suspense and to slow down the pace of dramatic action, to prolong rather than alter the status quo. Instead of increasing the pace of the story, Ford's scenes tend to retard it, and if noteworthy changes in the plot do occur, they often raise questions as to their effectiveness. Thus Bassanes' change from ignorant, jealous and self-deceived cuckold to remorseful and penitent husband in The Broken Heart seems too sudden and while its intention

may be to provide a measure of sympathy for him, it does not demonstrably affect the outcome of the play. Similarly, while Orgilus' false identity as a "scholar" is revealing symbolism through costume and rhetoric, the device ultimately has no place in the furthering of the action and is discarded just as arbitrarily. The banishment of Vasques in 'Tis Pity seems light reprisal and compensation for the horrific multiple murders in the play, several of which are his responsibility. The relationship of plotting to characterization is obvious, since what any character says and does is part of the overall action of the play. What is most revealing, then, is to see the same ambiguous pattern of strengths in Ford's plays inevitably linked with weaknesses. What appears to be the unravelling of the knot may invariably make it tighter. The reader-spectator is entitled to ask questions about these and other matters of dramatic structure, and unfamiliarity with the plays may very well produce a feeling of vague unease.⁶²

The third and final focus of discussion is also linked to the other two. If there is one area of rare conformity of opinion about Ford, it is in his use of comic elements as counterpoint to an overall tragic structure. All reputable critics who have bothered to examine this point agree that Ford was woefully deficient in making the time-honored device of comic relief serve any useful purpose in tragedy.⁶³ If this constitutes the most serious flaw in Ford's art, there is surprisingly brief and perfunctory explanation for it. For example, if the overt promiscuity of Ferentes and Mauruccio in Love's Sacrifice seems disgusting and trite in comparison to the more spiritualized relationship between Fernando and Bianca, the effect may be a deliberate attempt to show a

complex emotional situation in perspective, rather than mere entertainment for groundlings. It may be too tempting and perhaps inadvisable to transfer a modern attempt at sophisticated appreciation to what may have been simply crude and harmless amusement. But it is interesting to note that the serious love of Fernando and Bianca has its own absurd perspective. If the comic characters are all too susceptible to sexual consummation, the tragic characters seem slightly ridiculous in abortive efforts (first Fernando, then Bianca) to avoid consummation of their feelings, no matter how noble and self-sacrificing they may seem in comparison. Similarly, Bergetto's function in 'Tis Pity changes with our sympathy: he may be a buffoon in his attempts to woo Annabella, but his death earns him compassion as a hapless, sacrificial victim to the tightening web of horror in the play. Perkin Warbeck's deluded followers may talk elaborate gibberish (except for the politic and devious Frion), but aside from rhetoric, their delusion is the same as his and so is their fate. The juxtaposition of romance and farce, sobriety and license, hysteria and restraint, poignancy and obscenity - these seem arbitrary and deliberate, but entirely relevant to our understanding of the dramatist's form and meaning. Such speculations, then, make it all the more necessary to dispense with curt dismissal of Ford's efforts at comedy and begin to examine the reasons for his success or failure. Once again conflicting perspectives on Fordian tragedy are unavoidable.

It may be useful to summarize at this point. Ford's tragedies have stimulated a wide variety of critical opinion since the nineteenth century; such criticism often does not make the distinction between what is moral and what is simply good theatre. Most commentators have indulged

in at least brief speculation on the nature and effect of Fordian tragedy, without necessarily making a serious effort at a careful reading of the plays. Crucial to resolving or at least understanding the impasse is a thorough examination of character, plot and genre (tragic vs. comic elements); this can only be achieved through detailed exploration of the text of Love's Sacrifice, 'Tis Pity She's a Whore, Perkin Warbeck,⁶⁴ and The Broken Heart.⁶⁵ What the reader and spectator invariably discover is the tragedy of mixed effect, offering a complex and sometimes ambiguous portrayal of human thought and behavior. Characterization, structure and genre can provide mutually contradictory reactions in Ford's audience and it is in the exploration and exploitation of these reactions that the plays assume the critical importance they deserve. The cultivation of paradoxical aesthetic, of opposing modes of thought and action, is a fundamental part of Ford's dramatic vision. If Ford's method is not always entirely successful, it never fails to provoke controversy and provide a good measure of insight into his art. The question of success or failure is less important than the process it takes to make any evaluation of his plays:

The new Ford is saner, more purposive, less guilty of Fletcherian opportunism and altogether more conscious of his artistic duties than the antinomian, romantic stereotype . . . But in terms of a more adequate - as opposed to a merely more coherent - reading of Ford's artistic particularity, there remain some serious doubts. If . . . Ford is less superficial, he is also more mechanical; if he is less quixotic in his moral vision, and less fragile, he is also unduly normalized, to the point where he seems well on his way to a Popean domestication of tragic feelings, a kind of sober archivist of the Jacobean dramatic ethos . . .⁶⁶

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

¹ Virginia Woolf, "Notes on an Elizabethan Play," The Common Reader, (New York, 1953), p. 49.

² Cleanth Brooks, The Well-Wrought Urn, (New York, 1947), p. 9.

³ Woolf, pp. 1-2.

⁴ Ibid., p. 49.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 53-56.

⁷ Especially useful for further reading on this subject is Lawrence Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641, (Oxford, 1965).

⁸ Particularly recommended as comprehensive studies are Herschel Baker, The Wars of Truth (Cambridge, 1952); Marjorie Nicolson, The Breaking of the Circle (Evanston, 1950); Margaret Wiley, The Subtle Knot (Cambridge, 1952).

⁹ See in particular Patrick Cruttwell, The Shakespearean Moment (London, 1954); Hiram Hayden, The Counter-Renaissance (New York, 1950); L. C. Knights, Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson (London, 1937).

¹⁰ I am greatly indebted to the following sources for what is a regrettably brief discussion: Jacques Bousquet, Mannerism: The Painting and Style of the Late Renaissance (New York, 1964); Arnold Hauser, Mannerism: The Crisis of the Renaissance and the Origin of Modern Art (London, 1965), 2 vols.; Daniel B. Rowland, Mannerism: Style and Mood (New Haven, 1964); Wylie Sypher, Four Stages of Renaissance Style: 1400-1700 (Garden City, 1955), pp. 100-180. All of these authors stress the interdisciplinary and cross-cultural aspect of mannerism and all agree, either explicitly or implicitly, that the style flourished roughly between 1520 and 1620, or between the beginning of the Reformation and the Thirty Years' War, appearing earlier in Italy and later in England.

¹¹ Bousquet, p. 23.

¹² Norman Rabkin, Shakespeare and the Common Understanding (New York, 1967), p. 12. This study first became a possibility after I read Rabkin's original and provocative book.

13 "Suspension" has been defined as "a nonharmonic tone held over . . . on a strong beat from a previous harmony in which it was a harmonic tone, and then resolved (regularly by step downward) to a harmonic tone on a weaker beat . . ." (Donald Grout, A History of Western Music, New York, 1960, p. 664). For a concise and comprehensive survey of Renaissance music in England, see Wilfrid Mellers, "Words and Music in Elizabethan England," The Age of Shakespeare, ed. by Boris Ford (Harmondsworth, 1964), pp. 386-416. Rowland (pp. 21-49) has provided a detailed technical analysis of "mannerist" tendencies in the madrigals of Don Carlo Gesualdo (ca. 1560-1613).

14 Sypher (pp. 141-142) notes significantly that characters in Jacobean drama are often possessed by "irresistible but aimless impulses . . . making man a prey to the onset of violent passion that cannot be explained by any consistent or coherent motivation."

15 A concept discussed at length by Hauser, pp. 94-114.

16 The paradox was also a respectable literary genre in the Renaissance. See Rosalie Colie, Paradoxica Epidemica (Princeton, 1966) and A. E. Malloch, "The Techniques and Function of the Renaissance Paradox," Studies in Philology, LIII (1956), 191-203.

17 Colie, p. 10. See also Hauser, p. 13.

18 Ibid.

19 This observation seems to be the most acceptable formulation to rhetoricians, besides being the standard dictionary definition. See Sister Miraim Joseph, Rhetoric in Shakespeare's Time (New York, 1962), p. 323; Richard A. Lanham, A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms (Berkeley, 1969), p. 71.

20 Hauser, p. 12.

21 Rabkin, pp. 13, 56.

22 Sypher, p. 124.

23 Quoted in Hauser, p. 42.

24 The best single historical study is, in my opinion, A. P. Rossiter, English Drama from Early Times to the Elizabethans (London, 1950). Alone of all the reputable scholars in this field, Rossiter possesses the most sensitive awareness and the most concise summation

of English drama as a "mixed form," not only in the variety of formal elements, but how those elements are perceived in a single play by the spectator. The following is worth extended citation as an example of Rossiter's subtle and persuasive criticism, in this instance of a Wakefield mystery play:

In the Buffeting we meet at once that disturbing doubleness of tone and point-of-view which marks the two Crucifixions mentioned above, the Scourging and (to some extent) the Dicing-play. It seems to me one of the most noteworthy things about Gothic drama, and I believe that the easiest approach to it is through the two paintings by Bosch of Christ and his tormentors, one in the National Gallery, the other in the Prado. In both, two spirits are at variance: one focuses on the pathos, emphasized by the simplicity of the Christ: the other takes a cruelly humorous delight in the different epitomies of derision in the hard and mocking faces which imprison Him. Take this back to the Crucifixion and a similar ambivalent effect is seen. The executioners have made the auger-holes too far apart, and so they hitch a rope and stretch and rack out the body till the hand will reach the hole for the nail, shouting together as they heave. This is repeated with the feet. Then they raise the cross and agree to let it fall with a bang into the mortice, to jar the hanging body . . . A fiendish delight in the inflicting of savage pain appears throughout the scene; yet the fiends are heartless comedians at the same time. Only when they have done does Jesus speak: words heavy with pain, of a sad naive dignity. Then the same movement is repeated: the torturers lift and drop the cross again, and the heart-wrung pathos of the Mother follows, before the torturers come back once more. A devilish gusto is juxtaposed to the human agony in an ambivalence which the more durable medium of painting has preserved for us . . . Not merely the macabre, the torturingly horrifying . . . rather, the presence of two rituals at once, of which the one is the negation of the faith to which the piece is ostensibly devoted. The very values of martyrdom - of any suffering as significant - are implicitly denied by thus making game of it. (pp. 69-70).

²⁵ A. C. Bradley, Shakespearean Tragedy (New York, 1966), pp. 40-41.

²⁶ See especially Christopher Ricks, "The Moral and Poetic Structure of The Changeling," Essays in Criticism, X (1960), 290-306.

²⁷ Madeleine Doran, Endeavors of Art (Madison, 1963), pp. 256-258.

²⁸ Eugene Waith, The Pattern of Tragicomedy in Beaumont and Fletcher (New Haven, 1952), p. 34.

29 Ibid., p. 36.

30 Sypher, p. 150.

31 This phrase appears in Guarini's preface to Il Pastor Fido (1612) and, in a slightly different form, in Fletcher's preface to The Faithful Shepherdess (1608). Both are quoted in Doran, pp. 187, 207. For a fuller discussion of tragicomedy, see Doran, pp. 186-209; Marvin T. Herrick, Tragicomedy (Urbana, 1962).

32 See J. R. Mulryne, "Webster and the Uses of Tragicomedy," John Webster, ed. Brian Morris (London, 1970), pp. 133-155.

33 Eugene Ionesco, Notes and Counter-Notes (New York, 1964), p. 26.

34 M. Joan Sergeant, John Ford (Oxford, 1935), pp. 31, 25.

35 Robert Ornstein, The Moral Vision of Jacobean Tragedy (Madison, Wisconsin, 1965), p. 200. For a discussion of Ford as a "minor" writer, see David Frost, The School of Shakespeare (Cambridge, England, 1968). The following remarks reflect not only on Ford but also on other Jacobean dramatists: ". . . 'Minor' implies that a writer falls short: his works lack the integrated unity which we expect from a great author. His insights are fragmentary and mixed with a deal of lumber borrowed from other writers; he ekes out his inspiration with material which is often at odds with what he has to say. His intellect readily circumscribes his weak creative capacity, and persuades him to derive formulas for success from his predecessors; where upon the minor dramatist falls into lame imitation and is unable fully to adapt to his purposes the conventions he takes over. The failure may not be due to a lack of imaginative or intellectual capacity; with the Jacobean one suspects that the necessity of swift and voluminous production made them unable to realize their potential" (p. 24).

36 An opinion shared by the author of the latest full-length study of Ford: Mark Stavig, John Ford and the Traditional Moral Order (Madison, Wisconsin, 1968), p. vii. The most recent complete edition is that of William Gifford, revised by Alexander Dyce (London, 1895), 3 vols. For a survey of Ford's literary reputation, see Wallace Bacon, "The Literary Reputation of John Ford," Huntington Library Quarterly, XI (1947-1948), 181-199; John Ford, Three Plays, ed. with an introduction and commentary by Keith Sturgess (Penguin Books, 1970), pp. 12-18.

37 The Complete Works of Algernon Charles Swinburne, ed. Sir Edmund Gosse and Thomas James Wise, Prose Works, II (London, 1926), 385.

38 Critical commentary usually follows Lamb's dictum. For an interesting, albeit brief, study of the function of imagery in Ford's plays, see Donald K. Anderson, Jr., "The Heart and the Banquet: Imagery in Ford's 'Tis Pity and The Broken Heart," Studies in English Literature, II (1962), 209-217.

39 Charles Lamb, Dramatic Essays, ed. Brander Matthews (New York, 1891), pp. 216-217.

40 Ibid., p. 217.

41 Ibid., p. 218.

42 William Hazlitt, Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth (New York, 1845), pp. 108-109. Even towards the end of the nineteenth century, many critics shared Hazlitt's reservations about Ford, noting in particular his subversion of the accepted moral and aesthetic niceties:

The strength of Ford lies in the intensity with which his imagination enables him to reproduce situations of the most harrowing kind, and to reveal by sudden touches the depths of passion, sorrow, and despair which may lie hidden in the human heart. That he at times creates these effects by conceptions unutterably shocking to our sense of the authority of fundamental moral laws, rather betrays an inherent weakness in his inventive power than adds to our admiration of it . . . There is none of our dramatists who has so powerfully contributed to unsettle the true conceptions of the basis of tragedy . . . The dramatic power of Ford is therefore incomplete in its total effect . . . It excites; it perturbs; it astonishes; it entrances; but it fails to purify, and by purifying to elevate and strengthen . . . A. W. Ward, English Dramatic Literature to the Death of Queen Anne (London, 1875), II, 307-308.

43 Ibid., p. 110.

44 Ibid., p. 113.

45 Ibid., p. 110.

46 Ibid., p. 109.

47 Ibid., p. 110.

48 The first critic to use the term as a central theme in Ford was Stuart P. Sherman, "Ford's Contribution to the Decadence of the Drama," John Ford's Dramatische Werke, ed. W. Bang, Vol. I (Materielen ur Kunde des alteren Englischen Dramas, XXIII, Louvain, 1908). It is difficult and perhaps unwise to give equal attention to all of the numerous articles on Ford; many will be cited in the notes to this chapter. However, it is useful to mention those articles I considered particularly helpful in the preparation of this essay: Robert Davril, Le Drame de John Ford (Paris, 1952); T. S. Eliot, "John Ford," Essays on Elizabethan Drama (New York, 1960), pp. 125-140, 3rd ed.; Thelma H. Greenfield, "The Language of Process in Ford's The Broken Heart, PMLA LXXXVII (May, 1972), 397-405; Cyrus Hoy, "Ignorance in Knowledge": Marlowe's Faustus and Ford's Giovanni," Modern Philology, LVII (1960), 145-154; R. J. Kaufmann, "Ford's Tragic Perspective," Elizabethan Drama: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. R. J. Kaufmann (New York, 1961), pp. 356-372; R. J. Kaufmann, "Ford's 'Waste Land': The Broken Heart," Renaissance Drama III, n.s. (1970), 167-187; Clifford Leech, John Ford and the Drama of His Time, (London, 1957); Brian Morris, "Introduction to The Broken Heart," (London, 1965); William Allan Neilson, "John Ford," The Cambridge History of English Literature, VI (1919), 188-209; H. J. Oliver, The Problem of John Ford (Melbourne, 1955); Ornstein, pp. 200-221; Irving Ribner, Jacobean Tragedy (London, 1962); George F. Sensabaugh, "John Ford Revisited," Studies in English Literature, IV (1962), 195-216; George F. Sensabaugh, The Tragic Muse of John Ford (New York, 1965), 2nd ed.; Sergeant, op. cit.; Stavig, op. cit.; Sturgess, pp. 9-18; Peter Ure, "Introduction to Perkin Warbeck" (London, 1968), pp. xiii-lxxxii. Sergeant in particular stresses the confusion of artistic and moral judgments by critics (p. 132).

49 Typical of this approach is J. A. Bastiaenen, The Moral Tone of Jacobean and Caroline Drama (Amsterdam, 1930), pp. 102-103: "Whatever moral objections may be raised to other plays on the same theme, they are nowhere so numerous and so appalling as in . . . Ford. Just as in the preceding drama . . . both the man and the woman indulge in the vicious passion, and they are brother and sister. . . . there is here a lamentable want of backbone and a deplorable effeminacy, especially in the conduct of the man . . . As usual, fate is denounced as the real culprit. Giovanni has at his disposal no end of sophistic, casuistic arguments, which he derives from anything, even from his nearness in blood to his sister. And the whole is suffused with sweet, luscious, lyrical poetry, often of such charming beauty that we heartily regret that it should have been uttered in such an objectionable cause. Whereas transgressors of this sort, as is evident from the plays already discussed, are, in the majority of cases, morally depraved people, the two presented here are of a different type. The young man is conspicuous for both his mental and moral good qualities . . . The young lady also, at the outset, is represented as an amiable, well-conducted woman, but we soon realize that she is no whit better than her brother. There is about her an atmosphere of impurity, which manifests itself in the

sickly, extravagant praise of her brother's good outward parts, and she goes on with this nauseous commendation, even when she stands face to face with her husband after the detection. The only extenuating circumstance in her favour is the baneful influence exercised upon her by the abominable nurse, but the latter is more than compensated by that admirable friar, who, if to some extent a slave to convention, is an excellent spiritual counsellor . . . So far from acting as a stern censor of such criminal aberrations as occur in the play, Ford looks upon them with a lenient, sympathetic eye. Passion and sin, even when of so revolting a nature as in the present instance, are represented as irresistible, so that it is useless to fight them. Besides, they are surrounded by a lot of argument, which may cause the merely objective spectator to distrust his own notion of good and evil, and to palliate the ugliness of what is morally indefensible. This is very objectionable, for just as it goes against the grain to see crime and vice made subjects for laughter, it should rouse our indignation to see pity and sympathy invoked for that which really only deserves our scorn and contempt."

50 L. G. Salingar, "The Decline of Tragedy," The Age of Shakespeare, ed. Boris Ford (Penguin Books, 1964), 6th ed., p. 435. The "blurring effect" has been noted by other critics as well. See M. C. Bradbrook, Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy (Cambridge, England, 1957), pp. 38, 72; John Ford, The Broken Heart, ed. Brian Morris (London, 1965), p. xx; and Leech, p. 46.

51 Ornstein (p. 22) explains the phenomenon as follows: "The reason is not that the greater dramatists lack the ability to construct a neat conventional five-act structure . . . It is rather that the tragedians are constantly attempting to make the conventional material of the stage serve new and unconventional purposes. . . ." Madeleine Doran, in her valuable study of Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatic theory Endeavors of Art (Madison, Wisconsin, 1963, 2nd ed.) mentions the constant difficulty of Renaissance dramatists to achieve "organic structure" (p. 295).

52 See Salingar, p. 438, and Charles O. McDonald, "The Design of John Ford's The Broken Heart: A Study in the Development of Caroline Sensibility," Studies in Philology, LIX (1962), 161.

53 Sensabaugh, The Tragic Muse of John Ford, p. 11.

54 Ornstein, p. 202.

55 See Hoy, op. cit., and John Ford, 'Tis Pity She's a Whore, ed. N. W. Bawcott (London, 1966), p. xv.

56 See Stavig, pp. 168-169 and Ribner, p. 175.

57 For a thorough and enlightening discussion of characterization, plot structure and genres in Renaissance drama, I am greatly indebted to Doran, op. cit.

58 Cf. Kaufmann, "Ford's Tragic Perspective," p. 358:

"Ford does not write simply about 'problems,' as his critics seem to wish; he slowly learns to write about irreducible situations in which the qualities of the participants necessarily harden into tragic contours through their relations with each other. It is just this concession that Ford implicitly exacts of us as readers: that the human entanglements he writes about are precisely not problems, and the minute we literal-mindedly seek solutions, we collapse the delicately achieved balance of his plays . . . As a writer of terminal tragedy, he starts with the assumption of the good breeding and dignity of defeat. He denies us any vulgar 'escape' from disaster (which is, after all, what a solution is). . ." See also Kaufmann, "Ford's 'Waste land,'" p. 177.

59 Leech, p. 75.

60 James Joyce, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (New York, 1971), p. 205.

61 John Dryden, An Essay of Dramatic Poesy and Other Critical Writings, ed. John L. Mahoney (New York, 1965), p. 42.

62 Sergeant (p. 67 and passim) is particularly insistent on Ford's inconsistency of characterization, his lack of verisimilitude, and in the insufficiency of character to the demands of plot.

63 Practically all critics of Ford stress how comic scenes dissipate and subtract from the high seriousness of tragic elements, but they never seem to agree as to whether the failure is aesthetic or moral. Henry Weber, the first editor of a complete edition of Ford's plays (Edinburgh, 1811, 2 vols.), spends a significant portion of his notes on the plays in criticizing Ford's bad taste and partially blaming the defects on the nature of a Caroline audience (Vol. I, esp. pp. xxxiv-xxxv). Gifford also notes the general inadequacy of Ford's "ill-timed underplots, and those purient snatches of language, which debase and pollute several of his best dramas" (Vol. I, p. xlv). Swinburne (p. 348), Neilson (p. 196), Sergeant (p. 92), and Devrol (p. 323) echo this opinion. Ornstein (pp. 202-203), Oliver (p. 127) and Stavig (pp. 108-109) would agree on Ford's unsuccessful attempts at comedy, but they are more willing to speculate, albeit briefly, on the actual

function of comic scenes (i.e., Ornstein's theory of grotesque and deliberate anti-masque to scenes of serious passion). Stavig is more tolerant than Gifford of Ford's dramaturgy and the nature of his audience: he believes that Ford's alleged "immorality" is more reflective of ambiguity of tone in a drama calculated to appeal to the audience of the private theaters, "more sophisticated and less interested in moral exhortation" (p. 66). The single full-length discussion of comic elements in Ford's plays is an unpublished doctoral dissertation by B. J. Lucwo, "The Function of Satire in the Plays of John Ford" (University of Washington, 1964). Lucwo, however, is less interested in examining the technique and function of comedy than in showing it as a vehicle for social criticism and an illustration of what he infers to be Ford's analysis "of an aristocratic society whose ideals are heroic and noble, but whose practice is foolhardy and even absurd." (p. 32).

64 Though its chronicle source technically places Perkin Warbeck in the category of history play, the tone, structure and rhetoric of the play indicate that it conforms closely to Ford's other tragedies of Spartan and Italianate intrigue. For a discussion of the relationship between tragedy and history, see Doran, pp. 112-147 and Irving Ribner, The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare (London, 1965), rev. ed.

65 It is very difficult to date Ford's plays with any certainty. All of his extant, independent plays were entered in the Stationer's Register in a ten-year period roughly corresponding to the third decade of the seventeenth century (1628-1639). See Gerald E. Bentley, The Jacobean and Caroline Stage (Oxford, 1956), 6 vols., III, 436; Leech, p. 37; Sturgess, p. 11. Ornstein's comments are worth repeating (p. 291): "Because Ford's tragedies were written within a very brief span of years, their unsettled chronology does not have a crucial bearing on the interpretation of his art . . . In the absence of conclusive external evidence, I assume only that the tragedies were written fairly closely together some time between 1627 and 1633."

66 Kaufmann, "Ford's 'Waste Land,'" p. 168.

CHAPTER II

LOVE'S SACRIFICE

Illusions on the stage are created by the implied collaboration of dramatist, actors and audience. Every protagonist requires witnesses whose dispensation and judgment enables the world of which he is a central part to come to life. There is a persistent injunction to audiences, both onstage and offstage, to believe what they have seen, to remember the story created on an empty stage.¹ Renaissance tragedy is full of instances where characters become self-conscious of the "tragedy" of their lives and, as in Hamlet's final words to Horatio, compel us to recall their sadness and suffering, the chaos of their past, as a means of insuring the tentative stability of the future.² Whether these crucial confessions or eulogies are stylized and conventional is not as important as their function: to persuade the spectator to remember what he has seen and judge it accordingly.

In the final act of Love's Sacrifice³ the Duke Caraffa, remorseful over the murder of his wife Bianca on the mistaken assumption of sexual infidelity,⁴ contemplates the future consequences of his deed as he prepares to take his own life:

Children unborn, and widows whose lean cheeks
Are furrowed up by age, shall weep whole nights,
Repeating but the story of our fates;
Whiles in the period, closing up their tale,
They must conclude how for Bianca's love
Caraffa, in revenge of wrongs done to her,
Thus on her altar sacrificed his life.

(V.iii.105-111)

The villain D'Avolos' recognition of his own "role" in this "tragedy of Princes" (V.iii.145) and the promise of Roseilli, the new

arbiter of justice, to erect a monument to the tormented Duke and Duchess, underscore the necessity to remember the "tragedy" of the play after it ends. What the nature of that story is, however, requires some clarification, for the audience cannot confine its judgment of characters (and its assessment of the skill with which they were created) to simple criteria of good and evil.⁵ The plausibility of characterization, its relationship to dramatic action, its ability to elicit both admiration and disaffection, the complex relationship between protagonist and antagonist (as opposed to the simple dialectic of hero and villain) - all these tend to stimulate conflicting responses, to exploit rather than reconcile disparate elements of character, structure and genre in the play.

It is tempting to regard Love's Sacrifice as a play without a hero. Every character in the play exhibits contradictory behavior and the consequences of that behavior seem at odds with the personality the audience observes. At the beginning of the play Roseilli (paradoxically at the moment of his banishment) sees Caraffa as "great in his counsels, wise, and, I think, honest" (I.i.4). Coming from the man who eventually accedes to power when the failings of the Duke become tragically evident, this judgment seems ironic and ominous. Furthermore, it is balanced by the view of the Duke's counselor Petruccio, who regards Caraffa as a man "much altered from the man he was before" (I.i.93), confirmed in Caraffa's addiction to melancholy and his vulnerability to facile amusements provided by the libertine jests of Ferentes, suspected of seducing Petruccio's daughter Colona. Interwoven in the older man's cautionary speech is a narrative recapitulation of the Duke's courtship of Bianca,

which again through Petruccio's troubled mind reflects the unstable temperament of his ruler and an implied violation of social conduct in undertaking a noticeably non-aristocratic marriage. Since these remarks are addressed to Fernando, they provide a warning to the audience of potential disturbance by inviting us to see the direct consequences of Petruccio's fear:

His roving eye and her enchanting face,
 The only dower nature had ordained
 T' advance her to her bride-bed. She was
 daughter
 Unto a gentleman of Milan - no better -
 Preferred to serve i' the Duke of Milan's court;
 . . . Fortune - queen to such blind matches -
 Presents her to the duke's eye, on the way,
 As he pursues the deer: in short, my lord,
 He saw her, loved her, wooed her, won her, matched
 her;
 No counsel could divert him.

(I.i.107-111, 115-119)

Roseilli pronounces Caraffa's love as "fatal" in the closing moments of the play (V.iii.149) and the double meaning of the word can be traced to the first scene of the unfolding narrative. In Love's Sacrifice the past has an inextricable link to the present and future; Caraffa's love for Bianca, dictated by circumstance and personal choice, becomes the nexus to the play's discontent. The narrative design shows the close association of a priori acts freely willed with the inescapable events they determine, and nowhere more evidently than in the first act. Fortune, the "blind" overseer of Caraffa's marriage, symbolizes the equally uneasy events of the first act, which in turn insure the troubled future of the play - Toseilli's unjustified banishment (at the instigation of the Duke's sister Fiormonda), the Duke's melancholy, and the unwholesome

influence of the wanton Ferentes.

The next phrase of the action in this first scene merely conforms to the previous pattern: the Duke's friendship with Fernando, his "divided self" (I.i.205). This appellation connotes many ironic associations and reinforces the tension of a disturbing triangular relationship: wife - lover/friend/ - husband. The play's web of betrayal and horror follows from two men who share the friendship of the same woman, a woman who must conceal her dissatisfaction with her husband and her repressed passion for his intimate friend. Caraffa becomes "divided" in the feelings he bears towards Fernando (love for a close companion and hate for a rival in love) and Bianca (desire for a wife whose attractions he cannot resist and rage at her supposed betrayal of his affection). If we admire Caraffa's magnanimity to Fernando, we will soon see the tragic consequences of his effusive goodness. His emotions become "divided" because of a puzzling dilemma: Bianca has revealed her love for Fernando, but has not committed actual adultery. Caraffa has a right to believe his vows to Bianca have been violated, but this "truth" sets up a greater lie: D'Avolos, who sees enough evidence of a clandestine affair to be able to exaggerate Bianca's irrepressible feeling into the lewd posturings of a whore, becomes the means of distorting her behavior and in return dividing Caraffa's loyalty: As she gradually assumes two personalities (one sacred, the other profane) in Caraffa's eyes, so are his feelings torn between justified outrage and unwarranted cruelty. What was earlier perceived as Fortune's "fatal" marriage of aristocracy and beauty is now transformed into the "fatal" delusion of degradation, humiliation through carnality. The equivocal

nature of marriage and infidelity is reinforced by paradoxical images, the oxymoronic liaison of opposites:

The icy current of my frozen blood
 Is kindled up in agonies as hot
 As flames of burning sulphur. O, my fate!
 A cuckold! had my dukedom's whole inheritance
 Been rent, mine honours levelled in the dust,
 So she, that wicked woman, might have slept
 Chaste in my bosom, 't had been all a sport . . .

(III.iii.51-57)

Caraffa's stimulated suspicions are not entirely unjustified, since Bianca and Fernando express their fervent affection and their tryst is observed by D'Avolos. But their love is never consummated and the Duke is not allowed to know until too late that the lovers successfully resist their desires. Caraffa's half-light of knowledge corresponds to the half-spirit of courage to avenge his "honor." He twice (IV.i; V.i) needs to be shamed to action by Fiormonda and D'Avolos, and though his hesitation suggests his desire to be humane and merciful, he cannot be considered a man truly gifted with insight. The diseased fantasies of his dream of cuckoldry (IV.ii) contrast markedly with his sincere, pathetic rhetoric of penitence (V.iii.33-53). To make the situation more complex, Ford juxtaposes his efforts at repentance with his sudden anger at Fernando's appearance in Bianca's tomb, and once again Caraffa's behavior oscillates between contrition for his own guilt and projection of his own failure on to others. Similarly, his "pardon" of Mauruccio and Morona by banishment for the murder of Ferentes reveals a gratuitous act of mercy, only to be undercut by the canker of jealousy as he watches Fernando and Bianca ironically join the hands of the old couple in marriage ("O, my cleft soul!" - IV.i.175).

Caraffa's ambiguous role in the play ends as it begins - through the eyes of others. There is a certain amount of irony in hearing Fiormonda tell Fernando what we already have begun to suspect as direct witnesses to Caraffa's behavior; there is, however, a certain amount of logic in this refractory, indirect technique. First, Fiormonda repeats Petruccio's earlier warning of the consequences of marrying beneath one's rank, thus making clear at a crucial late moment in the play the fundamental error and potential catastrophe of her brother's misalliance. Second, even though she deceives her brother by painting Bianca as a shameless whore, what she now tells Fernando is true. Her own fruitless infatuation for Fernando becomes the stimulus for further revelation about the equally hopeless marriage of Caraffa:

. . . What would you say, my lord,
 If he, out of some melancholy spleen,
 Edged-on by some thank-picking parasite,
 Should now prove jealous? I mistrust it, shrewdly,
 . . . A prince whose eye is chooser to his heart
 Is seldom steady in the lists of love,
 Unless the party he affects do match
 His rank in equal portion or in friends:
 I never yet, out of report, or else
 By warranted description, have observed
 The nature of fantastic jealousy,
 If not in him; yet, on my conscience now,
 He has no cause.

(IV.1.210-213, 215-223)

Caraffa's denouement with Bianca and its immediate consequences provide the least flattering portrait of the Duke. Bianca's self-assertion of her deception simply confirms what D'Avolos and Fiormonda have already observed: the Duke is weak and cowardly, an unworthy and insufficient husband. Not only is Fernando "much the properer man" (V.1.70), but Bianca's attraction to him is ironically founded on the

same unorthodox assumptions which explain why Caraffa loved her. The ominous consequences hinted at by Petruccio and Fiormonda have now come full circle; Bianca rejects her husband for the same reason which compelled him to make her his wife. The grim repercussions make him a grotesque figure, disgraced not because of the cuckoldry he fantasized but because the silent power of attraction reduces him to a cipher, a bland foil to the full-throated but unfulfilled passion for Fernando. The wheel comes full circle:

Can you imagine, sir, the name of duke
 Could make a crooked leg, a scambling foot
 A tolerable face, a wearish hand,
 A bloodless lip, or such an untrimmed beard
 As yours, fit for a lady's pleasure? no . . .
 You would fain tell me how exceeding much
 I am beholding to you, that vouchsafed
 Me, from a simple gentlewoman's place,
 The honour of your bed. . .
 But why? 'twas but because you thought I had
 A spark of beauty more than you had seen.
 To answer this, my reason is the like;
 The self-same appetite which led you on
 To marry me led me to love your friend. . .

(V.i.72-76, 88-91, 92-96)

Fernando's earlier warning to Caraffa ("Do not shame thy manhood" -V.i.45) goes unheeded, but at the same time there is a curious dissonance to Caraffa's "sin." If his flaw was marrying for love and defying social convention, then his punishment is far out of proportion to his offense. If he kills his wife because she has deceived him, the betrayal was both "real" (a secret rendezvous) and exaggerated (no actual pollution of the marriage bed). If he does seem impotent and deluded through the eyes of others, his rage is not entirely foolish, nor is his shame. His motives become both distinct and obscure, plausible and baffling. Once again,

it is the process by which a paradoxical situation is discovered and articulated, not a problem conforming to normative standards of logic. Motivation for betrayal is simply "love at first sight" and motivation for its revenge is an equal but opposite "adultery at first sight." The line between protagonist and antagonist is blurred, and nowhere more evident than in Caraffa, who has become both murderer and victim, pathetic supplicant and irrational avenger.

Caraffa's ceremony of contrition at Bianca's tomb concludes the play with the perfect visual and verbal correlative to Ford's tragedy of mixed effects. There is a strong suggestion of moral regeneration:

Peace and sweet rest sleep here! Let not
the touch
Of this my impious hand profane the shrine
Of fairest purity, which hovers yet
About those blessed bones inhearsed within.
If in the bosom of this sacred tomb,
Bianca, thy disturbed ghost doth range,
Behold, I offer up the sacrifice
Of bleeding tears, shed from a faithful spring,
Pouring oblations of a mourning heart
To thee, offended spirit!

(V.iii.33-42)

There is, however, an astringent antidote to Caraffa's homily, a more disturbing catharsis to his grief. If the solemn music and elevated ritual appear to sanctify his penance in this final scene of the play, the sudden appearance of an enraged Fernando quickly dissipates the effect (paradoxically by Fernando's own "profanity" of the rites of mourning by appearing in Bianca's tomb wrapped in a sheet). Suddenly we are compelled to see the Duke through Fernando's torment and wrath. If we have momentarily granted Caraffa indulgence, Fernando breaks the mood by demanding Caraffa's punishment. Caraffa, a self-admitted

"butcher" (V.iii.44), becomes in Fernando's eyes an "inhuman tyrant" (V.iii.57-58) who rapes the dead. Similarly, Caraffa justifies his anger at Ferrando by interpreting the intrusion of an "adulterer" as a blasphemy of a contrite husband's sincere obsequy, a supremely painful reminder of the wanton callousness of feeling which destroyed the "saint" Bianca. Fernando alive at this moment becomes the bane of friendship (even as he was the paradigmatic comrade at the beginning of the play). His betrayal of trust makes him a mortal enemy who has offended the sacred rites of death but who, strangely enough, never receives the apology and repentance accorded Bianca, even though he shares equally in her guilt and innocence. Fernando's suicide by poison brings a rapid conversion of feeling in Caraffa, who now mourns for his friend and quickly follows him in the path of self-slaughter. The oscillation of thought and action is by now typical and patterned.

Ford portrays Caraffa as a multiple personality of shifting moods, alternately generous and possessive, ingenuous and suspicious, an adherent of royal prerogative and violator of social custom. His sudden conversions of mood and behavior constantly modulate sympathy and disaffection for him; like the other central figures in the play, his function is often misunderstood and improperly defined. The difficulty is in viewing his behavior as "natural" and causal; Ford constructs characterization through a pattern which conforms only to a principle of fragmentation and inconsistency. While this technique may insure the absence of a personality easily judged by convention and type, it does not prevent a lack of coherence and verisimilitude. Caraffa, as will be seen, is not the only "fractional protagonist" in Love's Sacrifice.

Fernando, the "perfect friend" of the Duke (I.i.133), shares in fact many of the characteristic ambiguities noted above. In his own personality he reflects the paradoxical tension of loyalty and betrayal that functions as a persistent motif in the play. He is all too easily made the odd partner in an uneasy triangle and just as swiftly he succumbs to the passion which eventually destroys that relationship. He tries to resist "the unruly faction in my blood" (I.ii.81), but there is a serious question as to whether Fernando, or for that matter his audience, understands its nature and effect. Fernando's love for Bianca is not easily defined,⁶ but an appreciation of its complexity goes a long way towards seeing his ambiguous role in the play.

Fernando's fevered and tortured asides and soliloquies suggest that his desire is disruptive, putting him in a state of agitation and torment at Bianca's "heart-wounding beauty" (I.ii.213), distorting his emotional equilibrium. Images of disease and damnation connote his distress: "Eternal mischief! I must urge no more; / For, were I not belepered in my soul, / Here were enough to quench the flames of hell" (II.ii.25-27). If Fernando responds all too suggestively to D'Avolos picture of Bianca (II.ii.) and her physical attributes, he also views her through a spiritualized, albeit diluted Petrarchism, which in turn suggests ominously the sad conclusion to the play: "Thus bodies walk unsouled! mine eyes but follow / My heart entombed in yonder goodly shrine: / Life without her is but death's subtle snares" . . . (I.ii.262-264). In his crucial interview with Bianca (II.iii.), Fernando stresses his chaste intents which at the same time stimulate disturbing impulses:

Great lady, pity me, my youth, my wounds;
 And do not think that I have culled this time
 From motion's swiftest measure to unclasp
 The book of lust: if purity of love
 Have residence in virtue's breast, . . .
 I beg compassion to a love as chaste
 As softness of desire can animate . . .
 . . . You cannot urge
 One reason to rebuke my trembling plea,
 Which I have not with many nights' expense
 Examined; but, O madam, still I find
 No physic strong to cure a tortured mind. . .

(II.iii.42-46, 48-49, 54-58)

When Fernando sees Bianca's rapid conversion to physical attraction, he resists her ardent protestations (she even kneels to swear her affection) by a "chaste kiss" (II.iv.77). Whether he shows admirable restraint or emotional paralysis in mastering his passion (II.iv.84) is open to question, but this "good, cold, easy-spirited man" (II.iv.73)⁷ cannot help being the cause of disquieting episodes in the play. His "purity of love" first affronts Bianca, then provokes a sensuality which exceeds his own; even when she agrees to unconsummated passion (after having sworn to kill herself if he seduces her), their tryst is distorted by D'Avolos and Fiormonda as a means of stimulating Caraffa's jealousy: "Fernando is your rival, has stolen your duchess' heart, murdered friendship, horns your head, and laughs at your horns" (III.iii.38-39). The events of the play confirm only half of this statement to be true, but it is enough to make Fernando a "villain" and a "viper" to the Duke (III.iii.57-58). The Iagoish voyeurism of D'Avolos makes Bianca and Fernando's concealed, repressed betrayal of feeling a "goatish abomination" to the laws of human nature (IV.i.15). If the sin of thought is no better than the actual indulgence of sexual desire, the

love of Fernando and Bianca seems absurd and expendable because of a temperance which serves no purpose. If, however, their sole sin of emotional incontinence is qualitatively different from sexual intercourse (and Caraffa's remorse suggests that this is so), then they assume a stature otherwise absent. The half-truth, half-sin of deceit is both an unavoidable fact and an inevitable exaggeration of the flawed and troublesome relationships in the play. The pain of Caraffa's betrayal demeans the lovers; conversely, their decorous conduct, given the intensity of their feeling, makes his revenge irrational and cruel.

The sincerity of Fernando's emotion and his resolute will may elicit sympathy, but there is no denial that he is at the same time the unwitting catalyst of the play's movement toward disaster, the victim of muddled intention and misplaced trust in himself and others. Fernando seems an anachronism in a world of intrigue and when he confesses his inability to play chess with Bianca, one senses his insufficient grasp of other "games" as well: "I shall bewray too much my ignorance / In striving with your highness; 'tis a game / I lose at still by oversight" (II.iii.9-11). For example, Fernando never fulfills Petruccio's demand that Ferentes be warned about the danger of trifling with Colona's affections; preoccupation with Bianca never allows "fitter opportunity" (I.ii.77), and he becomes the unknowing cause of a subsidiary but important catastrophe, Ferentes' death in a grim "masque," another game of pleasure for which Fernando has been appointed master of ceremonies. If Fernando can be ignorant of the potential danger to others, he can equally disregard two warnings by Roseilli and one by Fiormonda concerning his personal safety. Furthermore, he promises Bianca that he

will satisfy the Duke's demand that Roseilli return to court, but in the end can only acquiesce in Petruccio's curious intrigue in dressing Roseilli as a fool. Finally, Fernando's assertion of invulnerability to peril leads him only to avoid a life without love by committing suicide; he does not stage a dramatic rescue nor does he avenge himself on Caraffa as he plans (IV.i.111-113). If Fernando's appearance in the tomb is surprising, so is the way he escapes punishing others by observing the canons of self-slaughter.

All this tends to corroborate the pattern of characterization: Fernando both avoids and assumes responsibility by alternately pursuing and resisting his desire for Bianca, by his impulsiveness and tardiness in revenging her death and insuring his security. Consequently, his role in the play becomes blurred and judgment of his behavior causes confusion. If Fernando conforms in some ways to a stereotypic romantic hero, his actions are not always so predictable. He hesitates between self-assertion and self-diminution, another "fragmentary protagonist," whose "actual folly" (V.ii.61) is as difficult to define as the variables in his personality.

Bianca's role in Love's Sacrifice is complementary to her husband and her lover.⁸ She appears briefly in the first act as a dutiful, obedient wife who remains in the background and appears only to ask Fernando's aid in obtaining the return of the exiled Roseilli to court. When confronted with Fernando's confession of love (II.i.), she initially seems impervious to his advances and indignantly rejects his plea. When he tries again (II.iii.), he provokes even more shock and anger:

. . . Look on our face:
 What see you there that may persuade a hope
 Of lawless love? Know, most unworthy man,
 So much we hate the baseness of thy lust,
 As, were none living of thy sex but thee,
 We had much rather prostitute our blood
 To some envenomed serpent than admit
 Thy bestial dalliance. . .

(II.iii.64-71)

The irony here is rather startling when compared with what seems to be Bianca's abrupt conversion to Fernando's charms in the following scene, when she enters his bedroom clad in a nightgown. Fernando's wooing is reversed in a curious and sudden counter-ritual of her own:

With shame and passion now I must confess,
 Since first mine eyes beheld you, in my heart
 You have been only king; if there can be
 A violence in love, then I have felt
 That tyranny: be record to my soul
 The justice which I for this folly fear!
 Fernando, in short words, howe'er my tongue
 Did often chide thy love, each word thou spak'st
 Was music to my ear; was never poor,
 Poor wretched woman lived that loved like me,
 So truly, so unfeignedly.

(II.iv.16-26)

Bianca's rhetoric parallels Fernando's in both emotional intensity and equivocation. Her confession of love is both cathartic release and an unconscious acknowledgment of desperation, of a malady which produces fear and guilt. Fernando's "music" produces both rapture and "shame": Bianca's irresistible attraction to him is a "tyranny" which spawns "violence," making her "wretched." The tremendous compulsion to conceal her love by treating Fernando harshly qualifies her assertion that she has spoken "so truly, so unfeignedly." Both Fernando and Caraffa have illustrated how powerful feelings can distort reason and judgment;

Bianca's oscillation of behavior simply amplifies the dissonance.

Unlike Fernando, however, Bianca's conversion process omits "confession" through soliloquy: the audience must be prepared to see her response to Fernando as either completely unexpected or completely premeditated. Ford's technique of characterization offers us no clue in making her actions more credible. In Fernando's case we can at least see the rudimentary sequence of events which lead to his daring confession of love; in Bianca's situation we are asked to fill in the blanks, to believe her story without any corroborating evidence from internal monologue. Furthermore, even her own avowal of love is questionable; she only agrees to Fernando's entreaty by saying that if he makes a whore of her, she will kill herself (II.iv.55). That her solution is quite extraordinary and bizarre is attested to by Fernando himself: "Come, come; how many women, pray, / Were ever heard or read of, granted love, / And did as you protest you will?" (II.iv.60-62). No answer is ever provided and the protean shifts of the story continue with Fernando acceding to Bianca's demands: their love will never be consummated.

Even though the audience is never allowed to forget that Bianca is not guilty of adultery on a technicality, there is certainly enough suggestion from her quixotic behavior that she is no longer faithful to her husband. She has sinned and not sinned; D'Avolos and Fiormonda possess enough evidence to betray her and enough malevolence to distort that evidence to insure her execution on what she failed to accomplish. As the play progresses, Bianca's actions appear more brazen and unrestrained. She begs to steal a kiss from Fernando in public (III.ii.), enough stimulus for D'Avolos and Fiormonda to proclaim "the infiniteness

of her sensuality":

What is she but the sallow-coloured brat
Of some unlanded bankrupt, taught to catch
The easy fancies of young prodigal bloods
In springes of her stew-instructed art?—
Here's your most virtuous duchess! Your rare piece!

(IV.1.17-22)

Once again Bianca's unaristocratic lineage is suggested as the cause of her infidelity and the fateful mismatching of two people unequal in rank becomes, in the perspective of various characters in the play, the source of a destructive, unhappy marriage. "Virtue," inverted by D'Avolos and Fiormonda into an amoral plaything to entice and deceive, symbolizes by paradox Bianca's easy susceptibility to lust. Bianca's own behavior, however, makes D'Avolos' poisonous allusions closer to the truth. For a woman who felt the pangs of shame in first revealing her love to Fernando, Bianca has by Act V become remarkably defiant and assertive in her wish to retain his affection:

Why shouldst thou not be mine? why should the laws,
The iron laws of ceremony, bar
Mutual embraces? what's a vow? a vow?
Can there be sin in unity? could I
As well dispense with conscience as renounce
The outside of my titles, the poor style
Of duchess, I had rather change my life
With any waiting-woman in the land
To purchase one night's rest with thee, Fernando,
Than be Caraffa's spouse a thousand years.

(V.1.5-14)

A characteristic irony of reversal in thought and action has occurred. Bianca, no longer restrained in emotion nor fearful of the consequences of her infidelity, now asserts her passion defiantly. But her contempt for "iron laws of ceremony" never allows her to carry out the inevitable

consummation of an adulterous relationship. And even though she fulfills Petruccio's prophecy by renouncing her unconventional marriage, she can still only confess to her enraged husband that Fernando's loyalty makes her desires useless (V.i.119-131); she is forced to be faithful to Caraffa. Bianca cannot escape the consequences of either a loveless marriage to a man her social superior or her equally unorthodox liaison with Fernando. She is not afraid to confess her involvement with another man, but we are not to forget that her adultery was only a wish, never a fact. What we see from her point of view is again a fragmented perspective. Sensuality becomes for Bianca both attraction and repulsion, a stalemate of opposing wills. Fernando eulogizes her "adultery" as the renunciation of desire, the tremendous resistance to emotional temptation: "All the wealth / Of all those worlds could not redeem the loss / Of such a spotless wife. Glorious Bianca, / Reign in the triumph of thy martyrdom; / Earth was unworthy of thee" (V.ii.66-69). Ford seems insistent on portraying Bianca as a martyred saint to chastity and as a passionate woman determined to flout convention.⁹ Even if her behavior never culminates in the actual violation of the marriage-bed, we cannot avoid the sensual significance of an on-stage kiss. Bianca's courage in the face of death earns her sympathy and admiration, but the question as to whether her sacrifice is necessary punishment for her actions and whether those actions deserve a measure of mercy is left unresolved.

The role of subordinate characters in Love's Sacrifice is closely linked to a consideration of Ford's use of structural elements, particularly his contrast and balance of romantic-farcical, serio-comic effects. Roseilli's banishment and his eventual succession to the dukedom provide

a small measure of symmetry to a sometimes fragmented sequence of events, but it becomes difficult to reconcile his identity as an instrument of justice who re-establishes order in Act V with the Fool who speaks gibberish in Acts II-IV. We know that Fiormonda has contrived his exile from court, but we do not know why it is necessary for Roseilli to assume and maintain the elaborate intrigue of disguise or why no one seems able to satisfy the Duke's repeated request that Roseilli return to court in favor. Similarly, the Roseilli-Fiormonda relationship is never really a part of the central narrative: in the beginning of the play her enmity to him is evident (as is his curious attraction to a wicked, spiteful woman), but why in the end there should be a sudden growth of affection between the two (unless Roseilli's ultimate condemnation of her is part of an overall scheme of revenge) is part of the larger problem: how and why Roseilli "discovers himself" (V.iii.s.d.).

Symbolically, Roseilli's false identity as Fool can serve to underscore the ignorance of the other characters, to comment on the poorly defined norms of the play and the blurred shadow-world it portrays. He becomes the companion to the foolish old fop Mauruccio and what we see as pretended idiocy is contrasted by other characters in the play to the delusions of real stupidity:

Giacopo. For so shall she no oftener see the fool
but she shall remember you better than by
a thousand looking-glasses.

(II.iii.181-182)

Fiormonda. A fool! You might as well ha' given
yourself

(II.ii.271)

Ferentes. It is almost impossible to separate them, and 'tis a question which of the two is the wiser man.

(III.ii.57-58)

This is undoubtedly an effective visual image for the play, but its effects appear short-lived. While Roseilli's disguise makes the comic subplot of Love's Sacrifice seem more than a gratuitous addition to a love tragedy, it never succeeds in defining any more clearly Roseilli's role in the play. There is no doubt of the striking contrast between what Roseilli pretends to be and what he really is, but there is no real connection and no ultimate purpose in stressing his disguise, since the ending of the play would be the same. Roseilli's personality is insufficiently developed. His relationship to the comic characters adds some depth to the subplot, but his role is fragmented. There is need for integration, for a reciprocal and sustained relationship between the character who spends most of his time on stage mouthing incomprehensible sounds, the chorus who attempts to warn Fernando, the abortive wooer of Fiormonda, and the man who becomes the play's arbiter of justice, the healer of its wounds.

Ferentes is another character who typifies the play's attempt to utilize conventional and experimental effects. His capacity for both licentious behavior and sophistic rhetoric contrasts markedly with Fernando's sobriety and conscience. Ferentes' "sweet sin, this slip of mortality" (I.ii.25-26) provides a comic foil for both the serious romance in the central story and a suggestive image (along with Mauruccio's self-infatuation) of the depravity and corruption which surrounds the court:

'Sfoot! I wonder about what time of the year I was begot; sure, it was when the moon was in conjunction, and all the other planets drunk at a morris-dance: I am haunted above patience; my mind is not as infinite to do as my occasions are proffered of doing. Chastity! I am an eunuch if I think there be any such thing; or if there be, 'tis amongst us men, for I never found it in a woman thoroughly tempted yet.

(I.ii.64-72)

Ferentes seems the satiric model of a courtier; his wit seduces three women and entertains a melancholy duke. Ferentes is amoral and promiscuous, but this is in keeping with what seems to be his carefully defined role in the comic subplot. He deceives Mauruccio into thinking that Fiormonda loves "youth in threescore years and ten" (II.ii.110), and his own intrigues seem restricted to the indulgence of his sexual appetite and his talent for witty deception. But the comedy is not shared by his three feminine victims (not to mention Petruccio), and the perspective on Ferentes begins to change gradually with the persistent ex-coriation of women seduced and abandoned by "a monster of so lewd and impudent a life!" (III.i.22). At this point the implied contrast between Ferentes and Fernando joins the two plots of the play. Ferentes is too easily led to promiscuity, while Fernando is unusually sensitive to its unsavory consequences. As Caraffa plots his revenge, so do Colona, Julia, and Morona, but their deception is both a testament to their stupidity and their consequently greater need to avenge humiliation. When confronted by the accusations of these three women, Ferentes' profile becomes more strident, abusive and cruel; once he has satisfied his desires, all his victims become in his eyes diseased, "mouldy" (III.i.95), mares for breeding, food for the "clap-dish" (III.i.98). He loses

no time in describing their faults, humiliating them as he relates how easily they became susceptible to his advances. This darkening of the tone of comic intrigue corresponds to the impending destruction of the relationship between Bianca, Fernando and Caraffa.

The final scenes of Act III contrast the discovery of Bianca and Fernando's secret love with the terrible consequences of Ferentes' betrayal of the affections of his mistresses. The "entertainment" arranged by Fernando unwittingly sets the stage for Ferentes' murder and the juxtaposition of the two episodes increases the tension of the play considerably. The first results of one deception and the final results of another link comedy and tragedy by making their ultimate effect the same. What passes for "a courtly show of mirth" (III.iv.9) becomes a masque of death. Ford here uses the ritual of comic entertainment for ominous, grotesque effect. Ferentes' "playing" with the affections of others ends in his own slaughter by his fellow "actors." When the music ceases, the mood of levity is broken by the horror of Ferentes' bloody shrieks:

Uncase me; I am slain in jest. A pox upon your
outlandish feminine antics! pull off my visor; I
shall bleed to death ere I have time to feel where I
am hurt. - Duke, I am slain: off with my visor; for
heaven's sake, off with my visor!

(III.iv.17-20)

Ferentes dies repenting his sins and calling for "vengeance on all wild whores" (III.iv.48). His farewell from the play (except for the pathetic exile of Mauruccio and Morona) removes all elements of the comic subplot and his savage end looks back to the beginnings of a still more terrible tragedy and forward to what will be its deathly consequences. Ford transmutes the antics of a frivolous man into the fabric

of tragedy. Comedy no longer becomes the periphery of disaster; Ferentes' death is a symbolic warning for Fernando and tells the audience that laughter contains the seeds of its own destruction when it exceeds the function of harmony and reconciliation. It reminds us that our response to the play cannot be grounded on an exclusive, tightly controlled appreciation of the difference between romance and farce and it forces us to see how blurred the distinction can be between what is ridiculous and what is painful. Ferentes can cause humiliation whose source is stupidity; but shame rebounds to cause suffering and waste of human life. There is some question as to what Ford sought to achieve by killing and exiling his comic characters before the final two acts of the play. Certainly the tempo of the play is increased without the circuitous movement between two plots, but the symbolic death of comedy robs the audience of a perspective with which to judge the thoughts and actions of "serious" characters. The clemency accorded to Ferentes' killers cannot, however, wipe the memory of the waste of his spirit; the dark shadow of the masque epitomizes "love's sacrifice."

Also indicative of Ford's limited yet often resourceful short-range technique is his use of stage properties, in particular the mirror, which functions as a potent visual symbol. The first scene of Act II begins with Mauruccio admiring himself in a mirror - this is a simple and direct indication of his pretentiousness, his hopeless and egoistic love for Fiormonda. Theatrically, the scene is quite impressive, considering the otherwise fragile structure of the play. The audience is allowed to watch a foolish old man preening himself and to watch others in turn observing him with a mixture of amusement and sarcasm. Mauruccio's pretensions demand the approval of an audience and it is their

unflattering, satiric portrait of him which is the ironic consequence of his wish. What he unknowingly distorts in himself is echoed in the reductive comments of his unseen witnesses, who make him "a subject fit to be the stale of laughter!" (II.1.17).

The ridicule of the court breaks the invisible circle of Maurucio's invulnerability. Ford devotes an unusual amount of stage time to the old man parading before the looking-glass. The intent is not only the temporary gratification of humor: Ford introduces stage imagery in the subplot as a link to the central concerns of romantic tragedy. The mirror suggests both reflection of an image and its distortion: when D'Avolos shows Fernando a picture of Bianca (II.ii.) as a means of discovering a concealed passion, we see a suggestive commentary on the eventual catastrophe of the main plot. D'Avolos' "picture" serves as a powerful stimulus to a feeling Fernando seeks to repress: it is the emblem of deceit, of counterfeiting that feeling (Fernando's abortive suppression of emotion and D'Avolos' exaggeration of that emotion to provoke Caraffa's jealousy) by making it seem less and greater than it is. D'Avolos' "aesthetic theory," his ut pictura poesis, becomes the controlling vision of the play:

. . . Nay, I'll assure your lordship there is no defect of cunning . . . Were not the party herself alive to witness that there is a creature composed of flesh and blood as naturally enriched with such harmony of admirable beauty as is here artificially counterfeited, a very curious eye might repute it as an imaginary rapture of some transported conceit, to aim at an impossibility; whose very first gaze is of force almost to persuade a substantial love in a settled heart.

(II.ii.79-87)

Fernando's "conceit" is shared by others - Mauruccio, the maidens seduced by Ferentes, Ferentes' own belief in his sexual omnipotence, Fiormonda's infatuation for Fernando, the Duke's belief that Bianca has cuckolded him. Distortion by illusion and the power of fantasy is a theme close to the heart of Love's Sacrifice; both romantic and farcical elements contribute toward its articulation. Equally apparent is the audience's shifting perspective, its inability to judge the characters according to any predictive standard. The play's "curious eye" becomes a refracted mirror which invites the audience to share the dilemma portrayed on stage. Whatever originality and power the play possesses is a direct result of the mutual inconsistencies of judgment caused by mixed effects in characterization, plot structure and genre. Whatever flaws it contains come from the same source: characterization of insufficient depth, the sacrifice of overall coherence to intermittent, temporary dramatic effects. Love's Sacrifice is patently inferior to other Fordian tragedies in the development of its formal elements: it provides all too little compelling characterization and few striking or spectacular dramatic effects. But it does define and elaborate the distinctive design of Ford's tragic art: the examination and exploitation of paradoxical aspects of human behavior, achieved through the balance and deliberate contrast of rhetorical and visual effects.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

¹ Certain modern playwrights, notably Pirandello and Genet, play with this illusion and attempt to break down the sense of "credibility" between the audience and the stage, so often a part of classic and naturalistic theatre.

² For a valuable discussion of de casibus tragedy and its relationship to Medieval and Renaissance drama, see Willard Farnham, The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy, Berkeley, California, 1936).

³ All citations from the text are taken from John Ford, Five Plays, ed. Havelock Ellis (New York, 1965).

⁴ Though his suspicions are confirmed in their emotional attachment to each other, even though it is spiritualized and ultimately non-consummated. Leech (pp. 78-79), Oliver (pp. 80-81), and Frost (pp. 160-162) all note Ford's obvious debt to Shakespeare's Othello, of which Love's Sacrifice seems at times a pale imitation even though Frost observes that Ford "does not borrow merely to prop his weakness" (p. 160).

⁵ The judgments of several important critics provide a useful survey of attitudes regarding the moral function of Ford's characters. The difference of opinion once again suggests what I have mentioned above: Though they tend to agree on the point of ethical relativism or negativism, they disagree as to its source:

" . . . Ford avoids taking a clear moral stand in that he portrays conventional ethics in conflict with immutable physical forces. The problem of evil is thus left unresolved in his deterministic approach to the behavior and values of man. . . .

" . . . Here is no logic of cause and effect, no intolerance of evil, no heroic defiance of fate; here is a confused world, where convention bars man from realizing celestial love and in doing so brings man to his death. . . . In thus making adultery pure and in backing up this contention with the laws of scientific necessity, Ford creates a genuine ethical impasse and leaves the mind filled with confusion; In no sense are pity and fear purged. . . ." (Sensabaugh, The Tragic Muse of John Ford, pp. 92, 186).

" . . . While Ford does not bow to the conventionally moralistic opinion that all illicit desire is sordid, he upholds the more profound truth that submission to illicit passion degrades. In his tragedies, he pities lovers who are trapped by circumstances not of their

own making - by the accident of their births or of loveless marriages; yet he recognizes full well that it is circumstances that try men's characters and lives. To Ford the romantic defiance of circumstances has a Marlovian beauty, but it is also a symptom of weakness, of an inability to endure misfortune and calamity. . . ." (Ornstein, pp. 210-211).

". . . Ford draws for us the tragic plight of humanity aware always of evil but unable to find good, forced to live in a world where moral certainty seems impossible, and able to escape destruction only by blind conformity to principles which oppose man's reason and his most basic human feelings. The tragedy of Ford's heroes and heroines is in their inability to find a satisfactory alternative to sin. They can only die with courage and dignity. . . . Ford sees mankind poised, like a morality play hero, between divine law and a nature which seems in opposition to it; but unlike the morality hero he is incapable of choice. If human reason will not allow him easily to accept divine law, and if the moral order is full of a manifest corruption, it is equally true that to live by nature's light . . . is to become the destroyer of life. . . ." (Ribner, Jacobean Tragedy, pp. 155, 173).

". . . Ford's is no easy message of rational morality as a sure means of overcoming all problems. Implicit in his choice of themes is his recognition that living a virtuous life is difficult because of the temptations that face man. Ford does not pick situations in which a character is faced with a clear moral choice and brings about his own destruction by choosing wrongly. Instead he picks protagonists who represent the highest ideals of their society and places them in perilous situations not entirely of their own making. . . ." (Stavig, p. 190). Stavig classifies Ford's characters according to four types: the all-black villain, the passionate sinner, the noble victim, and the rationalizing fool. Stavig believes Ford's most successful protagonists are represented by types two and three and notes: ". . . When the passionate sinner and the rationalizing fool are combined, the tragic and satiric can fuse; when the noble victim and the rationalizing fool are combined, the tragic and satiric pull against each other. . . ." (pp. 62-65).

⁶ Sensabaugh interprets the plays according to criteria established as a neo-Platonic coterie ethic by the court of Charles I and presumably familiar to the audience at aristocratic private theaters. This code represented an unorthodox alternative to conventional standards of heterosexual conduct and may be summarized as follows: (1) Fate rules all lovers. (2) Physical beauty can be equated with goodness. (3) A

beautiful woman in consequence can be regarded as a saint. (4) True love is more important than marriage. (5) True love is the sole guide to virtue. (6) True love allows any liberty of action and thought. (The Tragic Muse of John Ford, pp. 105-132). The last point obviously makes what could be defined as refined and decorous behavior susceptible to charges of unbridled individualism and license. Sensabaugh's interpretation is unique but not altogether satisfactory, since there is no evidence to support Ford's advocacy of such ideas. See also Peter Ure, "Cult and Initiates in Ford's Love's Sacrifice," Modern Language Quarterly, (XI), 1960, 298-306.

⁷ D'Avolos earlier noted Fernando's aloofness to Fiormonda's charms: "He's as cold as hemlock" (I.i.260).

⁸ Sergeant (pp. 102-103) and Eliot (p. 134) stress the comparative superiority of Ford's characterization of women, particularly their nobility and ability to transcend suffering.

⁹ Cf. Ornstein, p. 220: ". . . She attempts to shield Fernando by assuming his guilt, by playing a brazen slut so effectively that we cannot decide whether she is an innocent posing as a wanton, or a wanton posing as an innocent acting the part of a wanton. . ."

CHAPTER III

'TIS PITY SHE'S A WHORE

'Tis Pity She's a Whore¹ is the play of Ford's most frequently performed on the modern stage,² and although its incest story provides immediate, sensational appeal, the reasons for the play's success are more complex. The craftsmanship is more deliberate and careful than Love's Sacrifice; more attention is given to the development of subsidiary plots as analogues to the central narrative. In this play Ford achieves a greater success in patterns of contrast between characters and episodes. The play also explores further the ambiguous, sometimes troublesome idea discussed above: the duality and unpredictability of human behavior, the heterogeneity and paradox of human experience. The comparative richness of Ford's art is here balanced by a more perplexing attitude towards the thoughts and actions of the protagonists. Keith Sturges has noted that ". . . the difficulty of deciding where Ford's sympathies lie argue either the skill with which things are balanced or his humanity before the problems posed. . ." ³ A study of Ford's technique may help us to see the problem clearly, if not to resolve it.

As in Love's Sacrifice, the protagonists invite the audience to investigate and judge their "story." As he prepares to murder Annabella, Giovanni seeks justification for his forbidden love, absolution for the sacrifice of his sister's life:

. . . If ever after-times should hear
Of our fast-knit affections, though perhaps
The laws of conscience and of civil use
May justly blame us, yet when they but know
Our loves, that love will wipe away that rigour,
Which would in other incests be abhorr'd.

(V.v.68-73)

There are multiple, sometimes conflicting reasons for seeing the incestuous relationship of Giovanni and Annabella as unique and they require suspension of the usual standards of judgment. If incest is a perverted form of heterosexual conduct in the play, Ford is careful to provide no alternative relationship by which to condemn it. Implied contrast with other characters makes it clear that attitudes and behavior within a relationship, not the form of the relationship per se, should govern the audience's reaction to the narrative. The tragedy of Giovanni and Annabella is a suggestive commentary on the moral vacuum of the world they inhabit; it is not, however, merely an exemplum, a parable of and for sinners. The forbidden intercourse is a paradoxical, tortured process not because it expresses a clandestine contract between brother and sister; rather, it becomes the source of catastrophe because of its particularly disturbing effects on their own sensibility, a situation that does not necessarily conform to any a priori assumption on the part of the audience. Incest becomes merely the most immediate and dramatically explicit coup de théâtre; the success of the play depends on the skill with which Ford compels us to focus our attention on more complex themes of betrayal and violence, in which maturity of purpose and conception are more important than titillation. What is most evident, in fact, is the difficulty of making any judgments which fit a satisfactory, normalized standard: no character in the play is a worthy spokesman for ethical ideals. This does not necessarily suggest that Ford is seeking to portray a gallery of degenerates or a grand guignol of horror and depravity; rather, he wants to show the painful process of being human, of having to rely on one's intelligence and sensitivity when values are relative

and improperly defined, when there is no authority who deserves respect.⁴

Giovanni's incestuous passion for Annabella is the central focus of the play from its very first scene and controls its sequence of events. There is no doubt of its importance, but the circumstances under which it is revealed are worth careful study. The play opens with a dialogue between Giovanni and Friar Bonaventura which is both confessional and academic disputation. Giovanni's desire is framed in the context of rhetoric; he tries to justify his love by attempting rational proof:

Say that we had one father, say one womb
 (Curse to my joys) give both us life and birth;
 Are we not therefore each to other bound
 So much the more by nature, by the links
 Of blood, of reason - nay, if you will have't,
 Even of religion - to be ever one,
 One soul, one flesh, one love, one heart, one all?

(I.i.28-35)

By such sophistry does Giovanni try to square a circle. The demands of the flesh are articulated paradoxically by the mind, but the syllogism cannot be resolved by the intellect. In trying to transform what is sensual into what is cerebral, Giovanni only underscores the insistent, chronic agony of a desire that cannot be suppressed: "It were more ease to stop the ocean / From floats and ebbs than to dissuade my vows" (I.i.64-65).

Thus Giovanni tries to rationalize his problem by false rhetoric and at the same time reaffirm its insolubility. He is both blind to the limitations of the remedies he proposes and sees clearly and painfully the cruel impasse in his fortunes. There is a recurring discrepancy between his energies and his capacity for insight; once again one sees the dualism inherent in Ford's technique of characterization. As with Love's Sacrifice, the opening dilemma is defined as unsolvable; its

ominous consequences can only multiply into catastrophe. Ford underscores the fact that Giovanni's situation does not change and that the youth's behavior conforms to the previous pattern, by providing a second interview between Giovanni and the Friar at roughly the half way mark in the play (II.v.). Once again we see "ignorance in knowledge" (II.v.27):

What I have done I'll prove both fit and good.
 It is a principle, which you have taught
 When I was yet your scholar, that the frame
 And composition of the mind doth follow
 The frame and composition of the body;
 So where the body's furniture is beauty,
 The mind's must needs be virtue; which allowed,
 Virtue itself is reason but refin'd,
 And love the quintessence of that. This proves
 My sister's beauty being rarely fair
 Is rarely virtuous; chiefly in her love,
 And chiefly in that love, her love to me.
 If hers to me, then so is mine to her,
 Since in like causes are effects alike.

(II.v.13-27)

The irony here is, if anything, more subtle than in Act I; Giovanni masters scholastic rhetoric in a second attempt to make passion subject to the laws of rational dialectic. His premises have, however, more disturbing echoes. This speech suggests indeed that the needs of the body, its "frame and composition," control the faculty of intelligence in an obvious inversion of Platonic and Aristotelian doctrine. Giovanni's intellect follows the dictates of a passionate will and whatever alchemy is connoted ("refined," "quintessence") reverses itself by creating the illusion of equating beauty and virtue as components of incestuous love ex nihilo. Verbal repetition in the form of puns and internal rhyme makes Giovanni's exhortation seem more like double entendre. If Annabella's beauty is "rare" by its uniqueness, "rarified" into

"quintessence" by its spiritual effect on Giovanni, it is also "rarely virtuous" because rarely practiced. Similarly, "her love" (first stated grammatically without an object) can either be equated to her virtue or "that love, her love to me." Repetitions in speech illustrate convolutions in thought. Equalization through parallelism and internal rhyme add to the superficially seductive harmony connoted by "like causes." Giovanni's "syllogism" reinforces the duality of his flawed, passionate intellect and suggests the powerful, often contradictory effect of Annabella on the various characters in the play. As will be seen below, the way she is viewed depends on the perspective of the spectator; her beauty and virtue are alternately degraded and ennobled by her passion and what other characters see in her becomes in turn a partial surrogate for the audience's complex, protean judgment. There is, consequently, no resolution for either Giovanni's problem or for the disparate elements which make up his personality. It is no wonder, then, that he is frequently described as "lost" (even by himself), imprisoned in the mystery of his passion (I.i.35, I.ii.155, II.v.69).

If Giovanni's love elicits abstract rationalization, it must also be viewed (as was Fernando's in Love's Sacrifice) as a sickness, the product of a diseased, distorted will. The Friar prescribes contrition and penance as purgative for the "leprosy of lust" (I.i.74). Annabella first sees Giovanni as "a shadow of a man" (I.ii.147), bearing the visible marks of melancholy, what he himself knows as "incurable and restless wounds" (I.ii.158). When Annabella suspects he is not well, he says: "Trust me but I am sick, I fear so sick / 'Twill cost my life" (I.ii.195-196). The central action of the play consists of the ironic fulfillment

of this prophecy, repeated in soliloquy and revealing the hopeless cycle of despair: "My fates have doomed / My death. The more I strive, I love; the more I love, / The less I hope. I see my ruin certain" (I.ii.154-156). The dislocating passion in turn forces the inevitable recognition of paradoxical speech, the yoking of opposites. Annabella's eyes "give life to senseless stones," her cheeks contain the "sweetly strange" mixture of lily and rose: "such lips would tempt a saint." Her beauty mysteriously transcends both art and nature. If love is inextricably linked in Giovanni's mind to potential destruction, a cycle of negative premises in paradox, then it can also make what is dead come to life, to resurrect feeling even as it destroys what feeling holds most dear. But the effect is partially unsettling; Giovanni's oxymoronic phrases entitle Annabella to ask whether he speaks flattery or mockery (I.ii.207-217). There is no need, however, for any protracted wooing; Annabella has always nurtured a secret affection for Giovanni and the effect of his anguished soliloquies is quickly dissipated by a battle won without a struggle (I.ii.256-257).

The consummation of their love is expressed through similar verbal paradox. Annabella is "no more sister now, / But love"; by submitting to passion she overcomes it; losing her chastity makes her "still the same"; Giovanni sees their love in the image of Leda and the swan and the "natural" fruition of their passion becomes an allusion, sanctified by classical myth but suggesting unnatural origins; finally, the climax of their happiness gives Giovanni the paradoxical opportunity to foresee the dissolution of their union by Annabella's future marriage

to "some other" (II.i.1-24). Once again the relationship of Giovanni and Annabella is seen in the context of inverted images, the balance of opposites. Ford here repeats the theme suggested in Love's Sacrifice: passion may be the supreme energy, but it cannot be controlled and it all too easily distorts behavior, creating antithetical personae in the same protagonist. Giovanni's character illustrates clearly the mixed effects Ford sought to achieve: a technique of characterization which emphasizes opposing traits, the simple repetition of verbal oxymoron as a rhetorical and symbolic leitmotif, and the structural patterning of crucial scenes, particularly the two dialogues of Giovanni and the Friar (I.i, II.v.) and Giovanni and Annabella (I.ii.II.i.). In the first half of the play, the more things change, the more they remain the same.

As Annabella's fortunes rise and fall through the brief respite of a contrived marriage and the ultimate discovery of her adultery by her betrayed husband, Giovanni's emotions undergo parallel alternation to conform to what he initially feared: the destruction of life and love. There is a brief suggestion that Annabella's marriage has provoked Giovanni's jealousy (II.vi.137), his anger and torment, but it is not until Act V that we see the effect of concealed affection and forced separation. Giovanni himself ironically notices "no change / Of pleasure in this formal law of sports" (V.iii.6-7). For the third and final time he rejects the Friar's plea that he renounce his forbidden love: "The hell you oft have prompted, is nought else / But slavish and fond, superstitious fear" (V.iii.19-20). His emotions have both deepened and distorted;⁵ his pride is both his insulation against fear of death and also the fatalistic spur to his march toward destruction:

. . . Stood death
 Threat'ning his armies of confounding plagues,
 With hosts of dangers hot as blazing stars,
 I would be there. Not go? Yes, and resolve
 To strike as deep in slaughter as they all;
 For I will go.

(V.iii.58-63)

We can applaud his courage, but his reckless pursuit of his own destruction simply makes graphically clear what he sensed in the first act: his irrepressible desire places him on the straight and swift path toward catastrophe. As he unwaveringly pursues his "bad, fearful end" (V.iii.65), he paradoxically becomes estranged from the only affection he values: "Are we grown traitors to our own delights?" (V.iii.37). As Giovanni willfully seeks the destiny wrought by insuperable passion, he destroys the source of that passion as well. Paradox follows him to the end. His thoughts after the Friar abandons him to despair are a striking, disturbing mixture of melancholy, madness and bravery: as he becomes more isolated from events which he cannot control, he more easily becomes a confirmed sinner (V.iii.71-79).⁶

What is perhaps the most controversial aspect of Giovanni's personality is not fully revealed until the final two scenes of 'Tis Pity: his capacity for violence. Giovanni's murder of Annabella (V.v.) has been variously explained,⁷ and the multiplicity of motive corresponds to the plural roles and moods he assumes in the play: Annabella has betrayed the oath of Act I; Giovanni seeks revenge to satisfy his jealousy of Soranzo; Giovanni wants to save Annabella from further torture; Giovanni kills Annabella to insure that no one else will enjoy what is forbidden to him; Giovanni is a psychopath pure and simple. None of these reasons completely justifies or, for that matter, completely condemns his act.

On the one hand, it fulfills the ominous predictions which appear consistently throughout the play; on the other hand, it can assume the appearance of a wanton, selfish and cruel act of a man consumed by passion. A dual judgment is unavoidable and yet seems equivocal, as if it could extenuate and punish at the same time. Even more revealing is the radical alteration of Giovanni's personality as he tries to save his love by destroying it. If Giovanni's daring acceptance of Soranzo's "fatal" banquet seemed disquietingly risky in the eyes of the Friar (V.iii.), his willful courting of fate seems dangerous and foolhardy to Annabella: "Why should you jest / At my calamity without all sense / Of the approaching dangers you are in?" (V.v.5-7). Instead of being merely careless of his own life, Giovanni now seems selfish, disposed through the ignorance of egotism to dispense with the life of his mistress. What previously seemed insuperable destiny ("It were more ease to stop the ocean / From floats and ebbs than to dissuade my vows") now becomes its opposite, in a characteristic and paradoxical inversion of rhetoric:

. . . Why, I hold fate
Clasp'd in my fist, and could command the course
Of time's eternal motion, hadst thou been
One thought more steady than an ebbing sea.

(V.v.11-14)

The verbal irony reflects the inverted world of the play: Giovanni can both disguise and acknowledge the truth when he is protected temporarily from its consequences; when his situation becomes too threatening to be ignored, it serves as a catalyst for the relentless pursuit of death ("a swift repining wrath" - V.v.47), and the false pretense of bravery which ignores shelter from the eye of the hurricane.

Giovanni, like Caraffa in Love's Sacrifice, has a dream of a surreal apocalypse:

Giovanni Well then,
The schoolmen teach that all this globe of
earth
Shall be consum'd to ashes in a minute.
Annabella. So I have read too.
Giovanni. But 'twere somewhat strange
To see the waters burn; could I believe
This might be true, I could believe as well
There might be Hell or Heaven.
Annabella. That's most certain.
Giovanni. A dream! A dream! Else in this other
world
We should know one another.
Annabella. So we shall.
Giovanni. Have you heard so?
Annabella. For certain.
Giovanni. But d'ee think
That I shall see you there, you look on me?
May we kiss one another, prate or laugh,
Or do as we do here?
Annabella. I know not that. . .
(V.v.30-41)

As Caraffa's nightmare of cuckoldry is both true and not true, so Giovanni's vision is an accurate prediction of the future based on a distorted belief in Annabella's infidelity. When Giovanni used the rhetoric of the schoolmen to justify his love for her (I.i, II.v), false rationalism concealed real desire. Here what the schoolmen teach is all too true: a literal and symbolic Last Judgment that promises no reunion for dead souls. The play's reliance on situational paradox achieves a culmination in a transcendent catastrophe where water burns, where the cynical posturings of Giovanni can be transformed into a fervent belief in Heaven and Hell. The paradox of a waking "dream," the disturbing tension of seeing and believing, is the perfect analogue for the troubled relationship of incestuous lovers. Only in the "other world" is there

a conditional ("should") basis for knowing one another: knowledge (both carnal and spiritual) is only partial, leading not to fulfillment but to the destruction of human life. Nature deceives in showing Annabella full of life when she is soon to die (V.v.75-78). Annabella's spotted reputation will only be cleansed "to fill a throne / Of innocence and sanctity in Heaven" (V.v.64-65), but even she does not know what lies beyond the grave.

Annabella's murder symbolizes the uneasy confluence of attitudes toward human conduct articulated through both structure and rhetoric. Like so many episodes in Ford's plays, it stimulates a conflict of responses, in turn caused by specific and deliberate dramaturgic devices. The disastrous consequences of a forbidden love appear imagistically in oxymoron:

Be dark, bright sun,
And make this midday night, that thy gilt rays
May not behold a deed will turn their splendour
More sooty than the poets feign their Styx.

(V.v.79-82)⁸

Annabella is "killed in a kiss" (V.v.84),⁹ destroyed by the convergence of the dislocated emotions which produce sex and violence. Beauty becomes the catalyst of its own destruction; like Cleopatra's asp, an act of murder reaffirms the indissolubility of all-consuming passion, the divinity of sex: "How over-glorious art thou in thy wounds, / Triumphant over infamy and hate!" (V.v.103-104). Annabella's life is both extinct and transcendent, and corresponds to Giovanni's sense of remorse and glory, inextricable and final (V.v.90, 102-103). The timeless cycle of birth and death is mirrored in the little world made cunningly of the

elements in the play: ". . . The hapless fruit / That in her womb receiv'd its life from me / Hath had from me a cradle and a grave" (V.v.95-97). Ford's skillful manipulation of visual and verbal paradox provides the complex richness of characterization; it evokes a coherent medley of opposites that is both provocative and disturbing. There is no exclusive, predictable, normalized pattern of behavior except what is already perceived as the cross-currents of an inverted, contradictory personality.

What seems the supernal reconciliation of forces in tension, however, can also be the apotheosis of the sordid and daemonic. The murder of Annabella is not simply a poignant liebestod nor the restful conclusion to the play's titanic struggle of the senses. Annabella's death triggers wholesale slaughter; the world which stifles and imprisons emotion is itself destroyed by the consequences of that emotion. The unchecked fury of Giovanni's savage triumph and rage reach a climax in the final scene of the play. The tolerance of any spectator is strained by Giovanni's entrance with Annabella's heart on a digger, but the grotesque cruelty it suggests as an icon of horror conforms to the unpredictable, uncontrollable pattern of behavior typical of Giovanni throughout the play. What the audience sees as "trimmed in reeking blood" (V.vi.10) is a startling visual embodiment of Giovanni's "sacrifice." Annabella's lover is now her "most glorious executioner" (V.vi.35). To the other characters (the Cardinal, Florio, Donado, Soranzo, Vasques, Richardetto) Giovanni is no longer the pale, bookish youth whose silence is conspicuous; Ford's coup de theatre transforms him in their eyes to a "madman" and "incestuous villain" (V.vi.36, 45, 53), "inhuman scorn of men" and

"that black devil" (V.vi.71, 92). Giovanni's final words underscore this image of infernal superman, but his prideful acknowledgment of the crime is a fragile fantasy which cannot prevent the deadly consequences momentarily awaiting him. If delusion led him rationally to justify his love for Annabella and then paradoxically to kill her, then it also makes him believe he can avoid the wages of sin (V.vi.73). Giovanni echoes Fernando's hopeless clandestine desire and Caraffa's urge for bloody revenge, but the range and intensity of his emotions have a greater capacity to alternate an audience's fascination and disgust with his thoughts and behavior.

When . . . one analyzes Ford's attitude to his characters and their actions, one may feel only that confusion now hath made his masterpiece. But this, as we have seen, is the way of Jacobean tragedy. There is no simple faith in the man who rebels or in the law against which he rebels. There is a strong sense of sin, and of the arrogance that comes on a man as he hardens in sinning; there is a sense that he has had no choice; there is a sense that his fellows are not worthy of judging him. . . There is a pattern in things, which leads Giovanni from his first impulse of love for Annabella to his murder of her and his own virtual suicide, but we have only glimpses of what that pattern signifies.¹⁰

The above statement might well be applied to Annabella, with the added observation that her personality and behavior act as a deliberate foil to her brother, without eliminating the possibility that her role is seen through the variable, subjective eyes of the other characters in the play. Critics differ in their opinion as well. Eliot regarded Annabella as ". . . virtually a moral defective . . . pliant, vacillating and negative. . ." ¹¹ Sergeant, on the other hand, clearly admires Annabella's willingness to admit sin, her endurance of tremen-

dous psychological and physical torment.¹² What is perhaps overlooked is the way her participation in the play contrasts with Giovanni's. Although she never dominates the action or projects herself as aggressively as her brother, her subtle presence compensates for whatever attention is lavished on Giovanni and reveals equally well the claustrophobic atmosphere of Parma.

Annabella is the object of considerable interest to the four men who pay court to her and she unwittingly stimulates the passions that cause the enmity of Grimaldi and Soranzo, the concealed anguish of Giovanni, and the innocent foppery of Bergetto. One gets the persistent impression that she is always being scrutinized, often threatened, by others. If Giovanni has no choice except the affection for his sister, she by comparison is troubled by the attentions of too many men. As Putana, her companion and "tutoress," observes: "Here's threat'ning, / challenging, quarrelling and fighting on every side, and / All is for your sake. You had need to lock to yourself, / Charge; you'll be stolen away sleeping else shortly" (I.ii.67-70). This is precisely what happens though Annabella has an ominous feeling about the future ("My soul is full of heaviness and fear" - I.ii.153). When Giovanni confesses his love for her, she is the restrained witness to his torment, but quickly releases him by acknowledging that she has always loved him, thus sparing herself and her brother further struggle. Unlike the relationship of Bianca and Fernando, who must define limits to their passion, Giovanni and Annabella fall into love quickly and fulfill their desires to the limit.

Several important distinctions, however, must be made in comparing

the roles of Annabella and Giovanni in the play. Giovanni exhibits by far the greater alternation in behavior: he appears both heroic and villainous, deluded into useless bravado and possessed of extraordinary courage and cruelty. The range of his emotions, the power of his actions to influence the sequence of events, marks him as a more assertive, aggressive companion to his sister. If he shows the kind of energy that perpetually wars against the confines of the world he inhabits, then Annabella shows conversely the hopelessness of the struggle, the sorrowful acquiescence in suffering, the passive endurance of fate. Giovanni makes Parma a battleground and ultimately a wasteland. Annabella becomes the sacrificial victim to the conflict. Ornstein notes that she "is a helpless pawn in the struggle between a jealous lover and a jealous husband, both infatuated with revenge."¹³ Unlike Bianca in Love's Sacrifice, Annabella never wars against her own impulses when her lover presses his suit (though the Friar's influence, his probing of her conscience, compel her to confess her sin and conceal it by marrying Soranzo), and she never reveals Giovanni's identity to Soranzo. She is killed by her lover, not her husband; unlike Bianca's assertion without regret of illicit passion, Annabella seeks heavenly mercy through confession and penance:

Pleasures, farewell, and all ye thriftless minutes
 Wherein false joys have spun a weary life.
 To these my fortunes now I take my leave.
 Thou precious Time, that swiftly rid'st in post
 Over the world, to finish up the race
 Of my last fate, here stay thy restless course,
 And bear to ages that are yet unborn
 A wretched woeful woman's tragedy.
 My conscience now stands up against my lust,
 With depositions character'd in guilt,
 And tells me I am lost.

(V.i.1-11)

Annabella, too, compels us to remember her "story"; unlike Giovanni, however, there is an explicit equation of sin and punishment, not an equivocal manipulation of logic to justify her sin as "unique." And yet she too is "lost" in the shadowy, oblique world of the play. "False joys" were ephemeral and no barrier against a cruel destiny; time all too easily wasted now becomes "precious." What ultimately becomes Giovanni's daemonic triumph over time and circumstance is for Annabella the moment of inevitable capitulation. If Annabella sees the fortunes of the play differently from Giovanni and is a more forthright judge of her own actions, she is still an elusive figure to others in the play and Ford insures the complexity of her characterization by playing upon the ironic discrepancy of perspective between her audience on and off stage.

Richardetto tells Annabella to her face that "Loud fame in large report hath spoke your praise, / As well for virtue as perfection" (II.i. 60-61). This contrasts with her actual behavior, a special kind of "virtue" (loyalty to a forbidden relationship), but one at odds with the conventional values represented by a father ("I will not force my daughter 'gainst her will. . . / I would not have her marry wealth but love" - I.iii.3, 10) and a cuckolded husband in pursuit of an unfaithful wife ("Now would I see what an impudence / She gives scope to her loose adultery" - II.iii.11-12). The play consistently comments upon the incongruity between fact and supposition: what people see in Annabella is not necessarily what she in fact is and her actual identity is explained subjectively by characters whose judgment becomes highly questionable because of their moral laxity, deceit and cruelty. Annabella's illicit passion is an incontrovertible given in 'Tis Pity, and what

changes is not her fundamental feelings for Giovanni but how those feelings affect the opinion of others. Thus while there appears to be a tripartite conflict within Giovanni's personality, there is little change in Annabella's behavior per se (beyond the sense of accountability she feels at the end of the play): she is always herself and the ultimate variable is how the other characters in the play (with the audience as peripheral witness) react as they discover what they severally consider to be the "truth."

To Giovanni Annabella epitomizes a perfect relationship between the sexes:

View well her face, and in that little round
 You may observe a world of variety;
 For colour, lips; for sweet perfumes, her breath;
 For jewels, eyes; for threads of purest gold,
 Hair; for delicious choice of flowers, cheeks;
 Wonder in every portion of that form;
 Hear me but speak, and you will swear the spheres
 Make music to the citizens in Heaven.

(II.v.49-56)

His catalogue of sensual delights, however, provokes a different view of Annabella's "variety" by the Friar, who perceives Giovanni's passion as horror and blasphemy. Annabella's charms in themselves harm no one, but in the context of forbidden love and Giovanni's "confession," they connote damnation: "a pair of souls are lost" (II.v.69). If Annabella's liaison with Giovanni makes her a whore in the eyes of others, her marriage to Soranzo (not her own choice, but suggested strongly by the Friar as "moral") causes equally deep suspicions in Giovanni:

What, chang'd so soon? Hath your new sprightly lord
 Found out a trick in night-games than we
 Could know in our simplicity? Ha! Is't so?

Or does the fit come on you to prove treacherous
To your past vows and oaths?

(V.v.1-5)

A love which contravenes society can as well consume itself.

What becomes its ultimate horrifying judgment is not simply the wounded pride and rage of a cuckolded husband (though Soranzo's changed attitude parallels Giovanni's, as will be seen), but rather its own destructive dynamic, the distortions of value insulated against reality. Giovanni's mixed motives for killing Annabella symbolize the complex reactions she stimulates in him: She is too valuable a beauty to lose to someone else; her easy susceptibility to Giovanni's attractions make it all the more easy for her to fall in love with another man as a violation of her faithfulness; her beauty is so rare and precious that it must be saved from the harmful jealousy of Soranzo. All these reasons are founded on paradox: Annabella's virtue must be killed to save it from self-defilement and the outrages of others. Her loyalty now seems a "fit," making her vulnerable to promiscuous impulses. The real, heartbreaking irony is that as Annabella tries to become more "virtuous," to be both loyal to Giovanni and to protect him, to acknowledge her sin by confessing it to the Friar and to herself in soliloquy, she insures her own destruction.

Soranzo provides the final perspective on Annabella and his process of perception from infatuation to hatred parallels the movement of the story from tentative stability to cumulative chaos. His love for Annabella, stimulated by the artifice of a sonnet, is still "oppression," which contradicts felicity and temperance. Like Giovanni, Soranzo feels extreme emotions, wrapped in hyperbole, bursting at the seams. Soranzo's courtship of Annabella (III.ii.) is a series of short, interjected phrases

in dialogue, exploiting the tension between his pursuit and her resistance. Her refusal of him, however, is a curious paradox that both allays and stimulates his desire. If she could marry, then she would be his wife, and the vague promise of a conditional future that has no relationship to her true feelings in the present makes Soranzo believe that her "absolute denial" (III.ii.85) is and is not final. That Annabella in time marries him, but for different reasons, only contributes to the ambiguity suggested by this scene. When Soranzo discovers her unfaithfulness, his revulsion at what he sees as her "hot itch and pleurisy of lust" (IV.iii.8) contrasts markedly with his feverish emotion in earlier scenes, where she became the epitome of desire, feminine beauty perfected and chaste. In Soranzo's eyes, her adultery is seen as the embodiment of deceit and humiliation, literally suffocating him with rage: "In the shame / Of thy lewd womb even buried me alive" (IV.iii.114-115). The deception of "her faithless face" (IV.iii.110), however, induces once again a paradoxical reaction. A wish for her damnation is coupled with the fruitless hope that she might have been a "saint" (IV.iii.113). No one could love her virtue as much as Soranzo (IV.iii.127-131), and he even promises forgiveness if she vows fidelity (IV.iii.140-142). But the double vision of Annabella as wife-whore only creates the capacity for further deceit in Soranzo, who secretly vows revenge. Of all the characters in the play, Annabella seems the most completely isolated, a woman whose sincerity of feeling and intensity of emotion (even in freely confessing her infidelity to Soranzo) bring only abandonment by both husband and lover. Her love for Giovanni makes her seek death at the hands of Soranzo (IV.iii.95), but it is the transference of what she actually

feels for her brother into the fantasized supposition of treachery to him that makes her loyalty the catalyst of her death. Annabella cannot change her feelings and Giovanni all too readily changes his: the equation cancels itself out but the result is the same. The curious turns of the story make Richardetto's words an apt "moral" for an amoral play-world: "All human worldly courses are uneven" (IV.ii.20).

Ford's development of characteristic stage technique shows greater sophistication in the management of structural elements. What seem isolated instances of careful but temporary stylistic manipulation in Love's Sacrifice achieve greater depth and coherence in 'Tis Pity. In the first place, all subsidiary elements in the plot have a close interrelationship with the story of Giovanni and Annabella. In particular, the insufficiency of moral norms in these subordinate relationships contributes towards the mixed effect of the main plot. Secondly, there is a more successful attempt to integrate farcical elements (i.e. Bergetto) with romantic tragedy. Thirdly, there is a greater emphasis on patterns of verbal and visual imagery.

In Love's Sacrifice, the relationships of secondary characters serve only as oblique, detached, partially relevant commentary on the central love triangle of Fernando, Bianca, and Caraffa. Fiormonda's frustrated love for Fernando provoked her intrigue against him and her disdain for Roseilli caused his exile from court, but the only consistent tension generated from a love relationship in the play comes from the uneasy alliance of the Duke, his wife, and her lover. The comic subplot is a skeleton for a symbolic prefiguring of the disaster of serious romance, but the relationship of Mauruccio, Ferentes, Petruccio, and the

three deceived women, is separated and isolated from the aristocratic main plot.

What was previously a discrete, loosely connected sequence of events has been transformed into a series of tightly knit, interconnecting episodes, whose effect produces a sense of duality and paradox not unlike the Giovanni-Annabella story.¹⁴ Thus Grimaldi, the rival of Soranzo for Annabella's favor, also becomes the unwitting cause of the death of Bergetto, a comic character and her former suitor. Grimaldi's desire to revenge his hopeless suit on Soranzo thus ends in a tragic case of mistaken identity. What occurs as a contrived accident of the plot acts as a subtle, ominous suggestion of Giovanni's slaughter of Annabella's "innocence," another case of "mistaken identity." Grimaldi's absolution for his deed by the Cardinal is paralleled by the Cardinal's pardon of Vasques for the premeditated murder of Hippolita, Putana, and Giovanni. Each episode raises serious questions as to the nature of justice and mercy in the play. When Florio exclaims that "justice is fled to Heaven" (III.ix.62) and when Vasques' crime is excused by "grounds of reason" (V.vi.49), an implied contrast is set up between crimes of "service" to one's lord (no matter what kind of crime, as long as the fact of loyalty is clear) and crimes for which there is no mercy (incest as perversion and adultery cancels out whatever "loyalty" exists between Giovanni and Annabella and that loyalty, as we have seen, is unilateral). Grimaldi's mistake and Vasques' "fealty" are equated morally but the strange silence of their victims, the equivocal reactions of witnesses, and the savage consequences in the form of continued violence make the love of Giovanni and Annabella strangely poignant in

contrast. To juxtapose such scenes with the violence associated with the central love relationship is to achieve a mixed effect by making it impossible to either wholly applaud or condemn such behavior: alternate behavior simply confirms our first confusing suspicions.

Similarly, Soranzo's moral indignation as an outraged cuckold is qualified by his cruel treatment of Hippolyta. What we see is not a one-dimensional equation of good and evil; he deserves punishment for his treatment of Hippolyta, even as he demands punishment for Annabella's adultery. To reverse the situation, Hippolyta's betrayal of Richardetto reduces the impact of her horrified recognition of Vasques' and Soranzo's double deceit. Vasques, too, has a dual function which makes for conflicting judgment: he is both an expert in cruel homicide (the deaths of Hippolyta and Putana testify to this), and the loyal servant of Soranzo, in whose name the crimes are committed.¹⁵ Since his offense is "not for thyself" (V.vi.146), his only punishment is exile, surely a curious end for one who so casually indulges in slaughter.

Parallel versions of mixed effects in characterization and structure extend even to the most peripheral figures. Though Hippolyta never has any direct contact with Giovanni or Annabella, the reciprocal betrayals in which she is involved become closely related to the fate of the youthful lovers. Her hopeless infatuation with Soranzo parallels his own attraction to Annabella and his cruel treatment of Hippolyta suggests what he eventually has in store for Annabella when he discovers her adultery, and what in fact is perpetrated by Giovanni when he in turn doubts her loyalty. Hippolyta intrigues twice, once against Richardetto and once against Soranzo. The "masque" intended to disguise the murder

of Soranzo (IV.i.) becomes instead the scene of her own death by poison and the festivities in question (the marriage of Soranzo and Annabella) will show an equally "ominous change": "That marriage seldom's good / Where the bride-banquet so begins in blood" (IV.i.111-112). Richardetto, deceived and abandoned by Hippolita, becomes a surrogate for Soranzo: he, too, seeks revenge, only to refrain from carrying out any reprisal when he assures himself that fate will insure Hippolita's demise. He, too, (disguised as a physician) ignores the tell-tale signs of Annabella's "illness" (III.iv), though he wonders about her feelings toward Soranzo (II.iii.). Philotis, the daughter of Richardetto, is a quiet, obedient girl whose compliance with her father's wishes contrasts markedly with the disobedience of Giovanni and Annabella; when she finally leaves Parma to become a nun (IV.ii.), the real power of its corrupted atmosphere becomes apparent, paralleled by the Friar's rapid exit from the city (V.iii.). The Friar himself prescribes facile bromides for Giovanni (I.i.) and Annabella (III.vi.) and his "counsel" forces Annabella into a disastrous marriage, even as it is powerless to stem the flow of Giovanni's passion. While he possesses none of the monstrous hypocrisy of the Cardinal, who gives dispensation and sanctuary to felons, his impotence in controlling the onslaught of evil suggests that the church is both too weak to mediate conflict and too enmeshed in expediency to provide a satisfactory alternative to the varieties of sin it confronts.

Donado and Florio, men who ultimately lose their youthful heirs through the progressive calamities of the play, merit the sympathy of their audience and yet each suffers from a characteristic ignorance. Florio is blind to the amorous intrigue between his children; his shock

over Giovanni's revelations causes his death. Though he says he wishes his daughter to marry for love, not wealth (I.iii.11) he is impressed with Soranzo's "still rising honours" (III.ii.4). Though he says Soranzo "is the man I only like" (II.vi.131), he also furthers Bergetto's suit, an act we can attribute either to an excess of generosity to a friend (Donado) or a lack of common sense. There is a question as to whether he seems a late Jacobean version of Father Capulet (without the rhetorical exaggerations or the intractability), but there is no doubt that Florio possesses enough moral indignation (even if his moral insight comes too late) to condemn the asylum accorded to Grimaldi for the murder of Bergetto. Donado, conversely, sees Bergetto for what he is, but only applies standards of justice to Grimaldi, not to Putana or Vasques (V.vi.). The liebestod of Giovanni and Annabella is to him a "strange miracle of justice" (V.vi.112), and Putana's death at the stake is "most just" (V.v.140).

Bergetto, the most truly comic character in the play, also appears in a dual role, perhaps the most compelling transformation in the play.¹⁶ His behavior early in the play likens him to an "ass" (II.vi.79; I.iii.82), a "baby" (I.iii.47) whose childish foppery completely blinds him to the harsher emotions of the other characters, making him both a moral innocent in a world of cruelty and intrigue as well as being its hapless, butchered victim. Thus in the beginning of the play we see him as the foolish suitor of Annabella, ridiculed by her, Putana, his servant Poggio and his uncle Donado. His pretensions toward grace and sophistication give him the appearance of a child learning to walk, whose pathetic posture elicits restrained tolerance¹⁷ and outright ridicule:

Annabella. This idiot haunts me too.

Putana. Ay, ay, he needs no description. The rich magnifico that is below with your father, charge, signior Donado his uncle, for that he means to make this his cousin a golden calf, thinks that you will be a right Israelite, and fall down to him presently; but I hope I have tutored you better. They say a fool's bauble is a lady's playfellow, yet you having wealth enough, you need not cast upon the dearth of flesh at any rate. Hang him, innocent!

(I.ii.126-136)

The alternation of affections to Bergetto becomes the comic, parallel movement to the duality of response associated with the other characters. He, like Giovanni and Annabella, is a "lost" soul: he defies his uncle and shows a measure of courage in wooing Philotis: "I will do't, for I tell thee, Poggio, I begin to grow valiant methinks, and my courage begins to rise" (III.i.17-18). He is also "lost" in another sense; he is simply too ignorant, too reliant on his own frail perceptions, to cope with the pervading dissimulation and betrayal. The "good jest" (II.vi.) which he tells for Annabella's amusement is a fable for his own future, fantasizing his own bravery but also prefiguring the horror which awaits him: terror and ridicule are inseparable from his anecdote and his real life. Bergetto's fictive bravado is a joke at his own expense: he tells of being severely wounded in a duel but laughs at his antagonist "till I see the blood run about mine ears, and then I could but find in my heart to cry" (II.vi.81-83). Similarly, his one actual foray into intrigue, his one brief exercise in bravery, is at the same time the cause of his destruction. As Annabella's pregnancy is the sign of her sin and its consequences, so Bergetto's "monstrous swelling" (III.v.44-45) about his stomach becomes an overt physical indication of his priapean fantasies

and the cruel fate which awaits him.

It is typical of the savage irony in 'Tis Pity that Bergetto should be mistaken for Soranzo, that the pattern of farce and horror should join in his murder in darkness, "disguised." We have now become accustomed to seeing the repetitive pattern of false starts, ill-timed assassinations, and mixed motives culminate in disaster: Bergetto's death contributes to Ford's design in a particularly poignant way. Elements of bawdry ("I am sure I cannot piss forward and backward, and yet I am wet before and behind"-III.vii.11-12) cannot be separated from pathos, the sense of absolute waste of human life:

Is all this mine own blood? Nay then, good-night
with me. Poggio, commend me to my uncle, dost hear?
Bid me for my sake make much of this wench. O- I am
going the wrong way sure, my belly aches so - O farewell,
Poggio - O -

(III.vii.32-36)

Bergetto's "wrong way" is only one perspective in a play where "all human worldly courses are uneven." If he "swells" in anticipation of pleasure, he also "aches" from the torment of a mortal wound. There is no doubt that Bergetto's role in the play is as an underling, a figure of fun, but this terrible slaughter of an innocent brings only sympathy. If Bergetto is a "mistake," a freakish addition to high tragedy, then one might also ask what other "mistakes" exist in the play, particularly the error which leads to his own death. Part of the unique effect of 'Tis Pity rests on the feeling of waste, of unendurable sacrifice it projects on crucial episodes; no better indication of this exists than the death of Bergetto, the character most harmless and yet most vulnerable to the pervasive cancer of blood revenge.

Bergetto is not, however, the only figure in the play whose behavior is both farcical and pathetic. Putana ("whore") also is preoccupied with the carnal and obscene aspects of human behavior. She sees Annabella's potential suitors through sexual and materialistic criteria. Marriage for her is the social convenience which insures the delights of eros and mammon. Grimaldi is not worthy of Annabella because he may "have some privy maim or other" and because "he crinkles so much in the hams" (I.ii.84, 86). Soranzo concersely is "wise," "handsome," and "rich" (I.ii.91, 95). Bergetto is, as mentioned above, completely unfit, and it is interesting to note that Putana's sarcastic picture of him is not without parodic allusions to the Bible which in turn comment on the unsavory aspects of marriage so evident in the play ("golden calf" - I.ii.131). Putana has the ability to deceive Donado's hopes for his nephew (II.vi.) and to keep Annabella's "secret." What Annabella and Giovanni see in terms of emotional pressure and psychological torment, Putana reduces to gross, physical terms:

How do I know't? Am I at these years ignorant
 what the meanings of qualms and water-pangs be? Of
 changing of colours, queasiness of stomachs, pukings,
 and another thing that I could name? Do not - for her
 and your credit's sake - spend the time in asking howl
 and which way, 'tis so. She is quick upon my word; if
 you let a physician see her water y'are undone.

(III.iii.12-18)

If Annabella has erred in this play, we have reason to ask what she was taught by her "tutoress"; certainly the play's preoccupation with the excesses of carnality and promiscuity reflects the continued presence of Putana and her confidential relationship with her mistress.

Putana's efforts to camouflage the truth of Annabella's condition, however, cannot resist the more clever intrigues of others. Like Bergetto, she is a foolish "innocent" when confronted with the deviousness of others. Vasques' policy of "sincerity" works all too easily on her susceptibility to loose talk and she pays for her indiscretion in ways typically out of proportion to her actual capacity for harm: blinding and burning. Vasques' "loyalty" to Soranzo is stronger than her allegiance to Annabella. The power of intelligence and evil is inextricable, but the victims sacrificed to such cynical expediency cannot fail to win a measure of sympathy by their weakness, even as we condemn their lack of scruples and tactlessness.

Finally, the manipulation of visual effects reveals how symbols suggest the multiple ironies of Ford's Italianate intrigue. There is no evidence from the play that Ford's particular strength lies in the richness of figurative language or variety of stage properties - both speech and its objective correlative cannot avoid conventional associations. Nevertheless, one interrelating pattern of rhetoric and visual imagery is worth discussing. Certainly the most sensational (and for some the most objectionable) moment in the play occurs when Giovanni enters with the heart of Annabella on a dagger. Aside from the superficial, visceral aspects of such an episode, what does it connote about the play as a whole? There is enough evidence to suggest that the heart is perhaps the most potent image in the play¹⁸ and that its numerous associations with banqueting, death, and disease form a verbal and visual leitmotif. Certainly the murder of Annabella signifies both the destruction of whatever compelling and sincere passion existed in the play; at the same time her

death reinforces the aura of cruelty, the wanton disregard of human life caused by the same passion, distorted and exaggerated. Thus Giovanni's entrance is both horrifying and the ultimate consequence of the insistent warnings, the perpetual blind alleys, of the strangulating world of Parma. In this way visual imagery achieves the typically mixed effect of Fordian tragedy and illustrates his technical construction. Giovanni's pride in "solving" his problem cannot be separated from the horror of the solution, "trimm'd in reeking blood / That triumphs over death" (V.vi.10-11).

Emotions are ambiguous and confusing and the heart, seat of the passions, embodies the tension. Giovanni's confession to the Friar (I.i.) has "emptied the storehouse of my thoughts and heart" in what purports to be a sincere confession of anguish (I.i.14). But it is also, as we have seen, simply an escape through sophistry, to make reason conform to lust. Similarly, the Friar's injunction to "cry to thy heart" (I.i.72) proves an insufficient remedy. To perform a ritual without compassion and to assume that the form alone will give release from suffering is to become as deluded as one who thinks logic can conform to intuition and impulse.

The demands of two suitors, Grimaldi and Soranzo, again confirm the tension of emotions stimulated by the heart. "The spleen of disordered bloods" (I.ii.26) opens a scene calculated to show the conflicting alternatives to the relationship of Giovanni and Annabella. The quarrel is a bitter banquet of sense, as suggested by Vasques' association of heart's desire with "spoon-meat" (I.ii.52); emotional appetite has its physical parallel, certainly not the last time this contrast will appear in the play. The "problem" of this scene is in fact the recurring dilemma of the play: should Soranzo believe that Annabella can love him?

The quarrel between Grimaldi and Soranzo is caused, says Florio, precisely because Soranzo will not believe the evidence of his senses:

"Why you should storm, having my word engag'd: / Owing her heart, what need you doubt her ear?" (I.ii.58-59). As mentioned previously, the contradictory effects of Annabella's characterization depend on just such a discrepancy between doubt and belief.

The first interview between Giovanni and Annabella suggests once again the complex function of the heart as a metaphor for human behavior under stress, its inability to find a release other than for its torment. Giovanni's love-sickness has "untun'd / All harmony" (I.ii.229-230), and "the hidden flames" (I.ii.234) make him "faint-hearted" (I.ii.170), afraid to reveal his love because his "heart" will be chastised (I.ii.172). Our shock at Giovanni's entrance in the final scene of the play is qualified if we remember that his all-consuming passion has, even at this early stage, stimulated divergent impulses in a disordered mind.

The relationship of Soranzo and Annabella follows a similar imagistic pattern. His undoubted sincerity in confessing his love through his "heart" is nonetheless a "sickness," just like Giovanni's (III.ii.23, 35), and contrasts markedly with his "heart of steel" in coldly spurning the pleas of Hippolita (II.ii.37). When Soranzo learns of Annabella's adultery, he wants to rip up her heart (IV.iii.53), although it is Giovanni who eventually commits the crime. Significantly enough, Soranzo's threat at this point is juxtaposed with the connotation of cannibalism, another barbarous "banquet"; he desires "with my teeth, /(to) Tear the prodigious lecher joint by joint" (IV.iii.54-55) and this in turn is paralleled by Giovanni's gruesome "feast" later in the play:

"I came to feast too, but I digg'd for food / In a much richer mine than gold or stone / Of any value balanc'd; 'tis a heart, / A heart, my Lords, in which is mine entomb'd" (V.vi.26-29). Furthermore, Soranzo's resolution to kill Annabella ("my heart is fix'd" - V.vi.2) is ironic and anti-climactic; moments later Giovanni enters with his horrible trophy. The heart, then, is synonymous with the brittle tone and unpredictable direction of the play: it is the emblem of paradox, the uncertain and often inexplicable turns of the story. Some of the reverberations are harsh: if the heart symbolizes the poignancy and intensity of Giovanni's love, it also has an unsettling pattern, a more dissonant echo. We have seen that Soranzo, when informed of his cuckoldry, wants to rip up Annabella's heart. Earlier in the play, Giovanni himself wanted to rid himself of the torment of unrequited love by a similar act, which would show the "truth" of his affection (I.ii.221-222). In those incipient moments of love, there was no need, it turned out, for premature burial, because Annabella confessed she had always been in love with her brother: "My captive heart had long ago resolv'd" (I.ii.258). The equivocal meaning of "captive" is crucial, for it suggests what is perhaps a mutual contradiction, the most irritating situation in the play: Annabella's unwavering loyalty, closely confined to Giovanni as his "prisoner," and the equally subtle hint that there is no escape, no solution, no release from his love. This is, incidentally, also used in a comic vein to describe Bergetto's love for Annabella (III.vi.8-10). In this way the simple, suggestive iteration makes the temporary bliss and the ultimate entrapment of Giovanni and Annabella clear. The actual consummation of love (II.i.) brings less satisfaction, according to such paradoxical logic,

than a heart "inflam'd" (II.i.4). For both Giovanni and Soranzo, passion can never be satisfied, even at the moment of fruition. When the two incestuous lovers swear undying affection for one another, Giovanni strongly urges Annabella to remember his love: "keep well my heart" (II.i.32), but the counterturns of the play cause him to believe that she has not only lost it to Soranzo, but that he, Giovanni, must repossess it, to fulfill the savage death he once wished for himself by killing Annabella.

As Giovanni justified his passion for his sister by substituting the illusion of reason through false syllogism (I.i, II.v.), so now does his "heart" reveal the ambiguity of his murderous designs: passion has intensified his desire to kill and yet "the tribute which my heart / Hath paid to Annabella's sacred love / Hath been these tears which are her mourners now" (V.v.56-58). Though he willingly sacrifices Annabella's life to keep that love "pure," to certify by an act of murder his sole possession of her, his homicide (willful as it seems) contains its own antithetical pathology of penance. He has "kill'd a love, for whose each drop of blood / I would have pawn'd my heart" (V.v.102-103). Murder in 'Tis Pity, as well as all other acts which define human relationships in the play, expresses both the sacred and profane, the selfish and selfless, the life-giving and the life-denying - all central antinomies of the human condition.

In Love's Sacrifice we noted Ford's use of the masque to underscore situational paradox: what purports to be entertainment for the melancholic Caraffa turns out instead to be the wages of sin for the promiscuity of Ferentes. The worlds of comedy and tragedy are joined and the elimination of comic characters by tragic means points the way

to the final catastrophe of the play. Similarly, in 'Tis Pity, ritual and ceremony add structural coherence and symbolic balance to the play. The first banquet celebrates the ill-fated marriage of Annabella and Soranzo, which in turn suggests other ironies: the abortive revelation of Soranzo's abandonment of Hippolita and her subsequent desire for revenge; the abrupt turn of events which makes her the victim of Vasques' treachery, paradoxically explained as loyalty to his master. Hippolita had tried to seduce Soranzo's servant into betrayal and her hope for vengeance once again illustrates the ominous association of feasting and killing: "On this delicious bane my thoughts shall banquet; / Revenge shall sweeten what my griefs have tasted" (II.ii.166-167). What seems "sweet" early in the play literally turns to the taste of poison, as Hippolita's "heart" is killed by the flames of the deadly liquid (IV.i.97). Her death, however, sets in motion a further series of disasters, suggested by her dying curse to Soranzo:

Take here my curse amongst you: may thy bed
Of marriage be a rack unto thy heart,
Burn blood and boil in vengeance - O my heart,
My flame's intolerable! - mayst thou live
To father bastards, may her womb bring forth
Monsters, and die together in your sins,
Hated, scorn'd and unpitied. . .

(IV.i.95-101)

This is precisely what happens; the same sequence of metaphors makes the language the vehicle of the plot. Annabella's pregnancy makes her body a "corrupted, bastard-bearing womb" in Soranzo's eyes (IV.iii.14), a torture to the adorations of his heart (IV.iii.121, 130). Finally, Vasques humiliates Soranzo into revenge by suggesting that Annabella wants to "laugh at your horns, to feast on your disgrace" (V.ii.2-3). This

persistent association of heart-banquet-sickness-death culminates in the final ceremony, the last orgy of blood.

At this point the verbal referents are unmistakable; when Vasques foresees Giovanni's doom ("Let him go and glut himself in his own destruction" - V.iv.49), the climax of the play becomes the embodiment of the equivocal effects which have appeared continually from the start. Annabella's impaled heart becomes the iconic reflection of the convoluted passions of love and violence made inseparable by character, plot, and language. If the play seems sensational and shocking, that is because its constituent parts will permit no other reaction. 'Tis Pity symbolizes, in its most horrid single act, the gross anatomization of feeling through the distorted prism of characters trapped by a stage-world where there are no exits, no moral norms, no release from cruelty. Giovanni's individualism becomes both the paradigm of self-assertion and non-conformity; as "individualism" it also suggests the canker, the monstrous root of a pathological personality impelled to destroy its progenitor (Florio dies of "a broken heart" - V.vi.68) and its procreator (Annabella's "fruitful womb").

In 'Tis Pity enigma and richness complement each other: Ford has constructed a "problem" play which examines how "incest and murder have so strangely met" (V.vi.162). The dissonance is patterned; the assault on logic and the senses is deliberate and controlled. The mystery which Ford explores is both morally unsettling and aesthetically provocative; if the play seems a puzzle to us, it is no less so to its characters. The artifice of 'Tis Pity does not conform to the symmetrical categories of right-wrong, happy-sad, serious-comic, which satisfy

expectations by a tonic-dominant structure. Its repetitive, discordant subversion of those expectations destroys our blind complacency in "unity." We see reality not through fantasy or improbably correct geometry; we see it for what it is to us, the fragmented, often troubled perspective of our own uneasy sensibilities.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

¹ All citations from the text are taken from John Ford, Three Plays, ed. Keith Sturgess (Penguin Books, 1970).

² Cf. Leech, pp. 138-140. The most recent productions were given at the Loeb Drama Center, Harvard University (1971) and the National Theatre, London (1972).

³ Sturgess, p. 362.

⁴ Remarks on this point by two recent critics are worth noting:

" . . . Unlike earlier dramatists Ford does not ponder universal questions. Certain that moral values are constantly reaffirmed by man's experience, he presents the rare individual instance that proves conventional moral generalizations. It is not surprising, however, that some critics have interpreted 'Tis Pity as a decadent apotheosis of passion, because Ford does not completely translate his moral vision into effective artifice. His judgment of Giovanni would seem clearer, for example, if there were another moral chorus than the friar, whose vision remains narrow and prosaic and whose speeches do not impress the imagination as do Giovanni's. Because there does not seem to be any alternative positions, moral knowledge and poetic intuition do not melt into a single, humane, ethical perception. And because Giovanni grows more insensitive to ethical values as the play proceeds, his belated admission of guilt seems almost an afterthought, a sop to Nemesis rather than a final illumination" (Ornstein, p. 212).

" . . . Though the motives which inspired the incestuous love are not entirely unworthy, they are not enough to justify it . . . The tragedy of the two lovers is that they love deeply and are ideally suited to each other, but there is a barrier between them which makes a successful and permanent love impossible, and the play as a whole never suggests that this barrier could or should be removed . . . Throughout Ford portrays events which, barely narrated, could easily be regarded as crudely sensationalist, but in his hands they take on difficult and disturbing meanings that are not easily defined. . ." (Bawcutt, pp. xv, xxii).

⁵ This effect is noted as "coarsening" by Leech (p. 59) and "disintegrating" by Sturgess (p. 371).

⁶ Sturgess notes the similarity to Macbeth (p. 372).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Cf. V.vi.23-24: "The glory of my deed / Darken'd the midday sun, made noon as night."

⁹ Cf. the Friar's warning (III.vi.27-28): ". . . Then you will wish each kiss your brother gave / Had been a dagger's point."

¹⁰ Leech, pp. 69-61. More negative and sympathetic views are provided, respectively, by Eliot (p. 131) and Sensabaugh, The Tragic Muse of John Ford, (pp. 171-173, 186-188).

¹¹ Eliot, p. 131.

¹² Sergeant, p. 186.

¹³ Ornstein, p. 211.

¹⁴ Sturgess (p. 363) questions the elaborateness of Ford's sub-plot: "It is a serious critical problem to decide how far the multiplying sub-plots are justified in the play and how far they are padding for a theme incapable of more extensive treatment."

¹⁵ Lucow defines Vasques' function much more narrowly: "Vasques is an agent of justice according to God's law as it is understood by a Christian society. . ." (p. 64).

¹⁶ Cf. Leech, p. 51: ". . . Though the Bergetto affair is crude, we shall not enter fully into Ford's world unless we see his motive for introducing it, the contrast between the intensity and the reluctance of Giovanni's love and the casualness and easy pleasure of Bergetto's." See also Lucow, pp. 65-66.

¹⁷ His uncle offers to write a letter on his behalf to Annabella and Annabella endures Bergetto's indecorous remarks: "She had a face methinks worth twenty of you" (II.vi.97-98).

¹⁸ For this discussion I am indebted to the general outline of Anderson's discussion, but it should be noted that Davril (pp. 444-452) believes such image patterns are relatively unimportant in Ford's work.

CHAPTER IV

PERKIN WARBECK

There is no man who differs more from another than he does from himself at another time.

Pascal

We must take into account the peculiar psychology of madmen; which, you must know, enables us to be certain that they observe things and can, for instance, easily detect people who are disguised; can in fact recognize the disguise and yet believe in it; just as children do for whom disguise is both play and reality.

Pirandello

No, they cannot touch me for coining; I am the king himself.

Shakespeare

You may my glories and my state depose,
But not my griefs, still am I king of those.

Shakespeare

I think the king is but a man, as I am.

Shakespeare

Perkin Warbeck¹ is, as its title page and prologue proclaim, a mystery and anachronism, so "out of fashion" (Prologue, 1.2) that its conflation of chronicle and tragedy has produced a "strange truth," "a history couched in a play" (Prologue, 1.14). Its author's apologia notwithstanding, the play seems, upon closer examination, highly original and idiosyncratic, both in reference to other plays of the Caroline period and to other works in the Ford canon.² Unlike Love's Sacrifice and 'Tis Pity, its setting is no longer the aristocratic and corruptive environment of fictional Italianate intrigue; rather, it focuses on a comparatively recent episode in English Renaissance history, and the details of the play correlate significantly with reputable source material.³ Swinburne regarded Perkin Warbeck highly⁴ and T. S. Eliot felt that it was "unquestionably Ford's highest achievement."⁵ More recent critics have also responded favorably to the play, if not with Eliot's exclusive, unconditional preferences.⁶ Ford's compelling interest in "Truth and State" (Prologue, 1.26) still seems attractive enough in form and instructive enough in content to insure the continued approval of the modern reader.

Nevertheless, the problem of making necessary discriminations between evaluation and polemic, understanding and a priori assumptions, is still critical. In a recent, albeit, brief, discussion of Ford's contribution to Jacobean drama, Arthur C. Kirsch notes that "Ford's plays have too often been the vehicles rather than the objects of critical thought and he has been praised and condemned for purposes he

probably never intended."⁷ The language and structure of Ford's plays, as we have seen in previous chapters, provides its own dissonant counterpoint to facile conclusions. We are spared the manifestoes and authorial theorizing of a Shaw, a Strindberg, or a Ionesco, but we are still obligated to confront and explicate an elusive, often complicated texture of transparent form and multiple meanings. In Perkin Warbeck, the Fordian formula of paradox and mixed effect undergoes mutation and variation, but the basic outlines, the seminal marks of identification, remain.

Unlike the previous two plays discussed, the protagonists in Perkin Warbeck exhibit no oscillation or inexplicable transformations in attitudes or behavior. Indeed, Perkin's constancy of belief in what many others assume to be imposture and his unswerving, reciprocated devotion to his wife Katharine illustrate by contrary example the play's continual, troubling exploration of the conflict between individual ethos (based on delusive, subversive ideals) and civil, national prerogatives. The audience is not exposed to variability in temperament or social conduct, as in Love's Sacrifice and 'Tis Pity; the question is not really the suitability of the audience's response to irregularities in rhetoric and action. Instead, the audience witnesses something different, even if equally uneasy: the unchanging devotion of Warbeck to his hopeless cause as it contrasts to the claims of Henry VII and "his own royal birthright" (I.i.9). Characters and circumstances reveal themselves to be ambivalent by their inability or refusal to change as immutability produces impercipience, not (as we have seen earlier) by the sheer bewildering rapidity of identities, mise en scène and provocative situations. Loyalty as a positive ethic is Janus-faced in the play: on the

one hand, the reader-spectator sees the persistence of misguided belief in "trim duke Perkin" (I.i.77), "impostor without precedent" (V.iii.208), whose steadfastness to spurious heritage functions as a paradoxical image of nobility, a capacity to endure suffering and defeat. On the other hand, the sanctioned, inviolable belief in the legitimacy and civil order of Tudor kingship has equally committed, perhaps more purposeful and resourceful adherents of "those holy motions which inspire / The sacred heart of an anointed body!" (III.iv.43-44). It is the play's task to reveal the thematic and structural incompatibilities between these private and public mythologies, to make the necessary contrast between Perkin, "Plantagenet undoubted" (II.iii.76), and Henry, the first of the Tudors.

Thus Perkin Warbeck implicitly advocates a return to more normative personal and public values. Loyalty, even to a pretender, is a type of strength, a revelation of virtu, even if not common sense. The characters who arguably deserve the most censure are those who waver and defect from their cause: James of Scotland, Clifford, and Stanley. Romantic elements in the play stress the power, not the weakness, of personal relationships: Dalyell, Huntly, Katharine and Warbeck all exemplify sacrifice, compassion, and charity. Adultery, incest, crime passionel, hypocrisy, indecorous or improper conduct - all these are either absent from the play or severely restricted in their dramatic impact. Even Warbeck's deluded coterie, a most comic and pitiful lot, reflect the pathetic and poignant elements in an ignorant rabble, the simplicity of erring children. In the words of John a-Water at the end of the play:

Under your good favours, as men are men, they
may err. For I confess, respectively, in taking
great parts, the one side prevailing, the other

side must go down. Herein the point is clear, if the proverb hold that hanging goes by destiny, that it is to little purpose to say, this thing or that shall be thus or thus; for as the fates will have it, so it must be, and who can help it?

(V.ii.104-110)

In the plays discussed previously, a conversely corruptive and poisoned atmosphere is not hard to detect - flawed and equivocal rhetoric, emotional and spiritual paralysis, the sense of inescapable sin and damnation. What characters say in Love's Sacrifice and 'Tis Pity is often at odds with what they do; no matter how conventional or stylized, the dramatic action in these plays reflects a fundamental discrepancy between intention and effect, mirrored in fragmented characterization, mixed effects in genre and language. In Perkin Warbeck fathers respect their children, and children obey father and king. A disappointed lover like Dalyell does not indulge his desire for revenge and requital of his distress through violence; instead, he steadfastly and stoically maintains his allegiance to both Katharine and Warbeck, and is rewarded in the end by the pardon and patronage of Henry VII. There is, as a result, less awareness of perjured emotion, bankrupt passion, and the ruinous effects of duplicity, manipulation, and intrigue in affairs of the heart.

Perkin Warbeck consequently offers a marked re-constitution of Fordian dramatic theme and form. Ford's Italianate tragedies revealed a patterned assault on moral and aesthetic expectations through a dramatic structure so protean it encouraged totally opposing feelings and responses in its audience to encourage shock and surprise, a vision of personal and social catastrophe without moral compensation or resolution. Character motivation, continuity of narrative, and subtleties of genre and

language were continually sacrificed to immediacy of effect, sometimes incongruous, often sensational. While retaining its author's characteristic reliance on the vision and structure of paradox, Perkin Warbeck reinterprets narrative and metaphor to provide (1) avoidance of moral behavior which cultivates violence and promiscuity; (2) two equally potent and demanding normative values, one personally admirable but politically unjustifiable, and the other personally expedient but politically sanctioned, both of which are maintained consistently throughout the play; (3) a consequent reduction of farcical material to make the comic sub-plot conform more closely to the unity of tone and structure implicit in the play.

The dualities inherent in Perkin Warbeck are, nonetheless, problematic, unmistakable, and inevitable; if the play contains the ubiquitous homily against political disorder and rebellion, it is yet equally orthodox in the personal morality of the titular "hero," the agent of anarchy. If his cause is pure delusion, his language and gestures are curiously lyrical, restrained, and sincere. His marriage to Katharine is based on dubiety and misconception, an arrangement for purely political purposes; yet when the failure and hopelessness of Perkin's cause become most apparent, his personal relationship is transformed into an experience at once emotionally compelling, a celebration of devotion and compassion. When Perkin dies, no one but he truly believes in the rightness of his political mission, but his very individuality, his total isolation from the logic and lesson of history, is "a triumph over tyranny" (V.iii.188).

Henry VII, Warbeck's royal antagonist, is far too sanguine and resourceful to panic at the threat of a counterfeit king; Warbeck's rebellion is "like some unquiet dream," which "rather busied / Our fancy than affrighted rest of state" (V.ii.8-9). Yet Henry cannot destroy Perkin's artficed royalty; the ease with which the state is "purged of corrupted blood" (V.iii.219) contrasts significantly with the hopeless effort to make Warbeck admit his pretense. Conversely, Warbeck's "victory" is purely solipsistic, "impudence in forgery" (V.ii.131); Henry sees no "wonder" in Warbeck, no vestige of the miraculous (V.ii.36), but at the same time cannot induce him to renounce the charade of "antic pageantry" (V.ii.88). If Henry is orderly and prudent, the archetypal governor, Warbeck is martyred majesty, totally self-sacrificing, inevitably self-destructive, king of passion and "King o'er Death" (V.iii.207). Kingship and impostorship are both rituals which re-enact history as a "theatre of greatness" (Epilogue, 1.4): though the legitimacy and power of the Tudor state prevail, the fabric of the play provides another "counter-truth,"⁸ which sees in the total theatricality of Warbeck's personality "the threats of majesty, the strength of passion" (Epilogue, 1.2). This central antinomy, the uneasy balance between tragedy and history, is worth closer examination. Ford has, perhaps for the first time in his plays, managed the re-integration of paradoxical elements so that they become the true emblem, the fully articulated design of tragedy.

The Prologue to this comparatively late history play (1634) indicates that Ford was perfectly aware of the difficulty, the inherent incongruity, of reviving a dormant dramatic form. Initially, the play

seems less an experiment than a review of a familiar problem: the arrangement of historical, "formless" events to conform to an artificial structure, the disposition of a tragic play in five acts. Shakespeare's histories illustrate quite well how generic considerations modulate and transform source material: the story, even if legendary or mythological, is familiar to its audience and the playwright capitalizes on their "sense of an ending," but the author's arbitrary superimposition and independent re-arrangement and selectivity in manipulating "fact" can erase conventional responses and expectations. No better authority on this uneasy compromise exists than Dr. Johnson, who saw Shakespeare's revision and reworking of an old anonymous play of King Leir "contrary to the natural ideas of justice, to the hope of the reader, and, what is yet more strange, to the faith of the chronicles" (my italics).⁹ Shakespeare becomes most instructive to the reader when one perceives the clear and consistent pattern of interpolation and restructuring of source material: convention is invariably transformed into what is original and unconventional. Falstaff never lived but he "lives" in Henry IV. The gardeners in Richard II are allegorical, not literal; no chronicle records their appearance but their sense of the lesson of the play's "history" is intense and perceptive enough.¹⁰

The Renaissance history play reveals, almost insists upon, the fundamental inseparability of reality and artifice: the dramatic instincts of the author are a mimesis of fact, a picture of the "truth." The playwright documents by "feigning" beyond the quotidian and the empirical: all facts are not equal in importance and only some facts constitute the play. Sidney, in his Defense of Poetry (1595), notes, in a

now famous passage, that ". . . only the poet, disdaining to be tied to any such subjection, lifted up with the vigor of his own invention, doth grow in effect into another nature, in making things either better then Nature bringeth forth, or, quite anew, forms such as never were in Nature."¹¹ The history play thus represents the severest test to Sidney's criteria as it attempts to mediate between the demands of "scientific" history and poetical "fancy." In a later passage in the Defense, Sidney pursues this question further, without necessarily resolving its equivocation and ambivalence: ". . . And do they not know that a tragedy is tied to the laws of poesy and not of history; not bound to follow the story, but having liberty either to feign a quite new matter or to frame the history to the most tragic conveniency?"¹² The delineation of formal elements - narrative, characterization, genre, and language - explain, if not resolve, the process of interpolating and transforming the work of the chronicler into the "tragical conveniency" of the dramatist. Sidney could thus praise the style and morality of Gorboduc and at the same time feel that because "it is very defectious in the circumstances . . . it might not remain as an exact model of all tragedies."¹³ Even if the unities do not represent the actual historical "past," they do act as a counterpoise to illogical supposition, phantasies which deny the reality of place and time. The very fact that the history play must subsume and re-orchestrate a considerable quantity of history which transcends the conventional criteria of time and space makes its form and meaning hybridized, an uneasy fusion of fact and fiction.

The more mature and "artistic" a history play, the less its "message" or "vision" can be restricted to nationalistic encomium or

the didactic oracle which draws lessons from contemporary politics and applies them to human conduct.¹⁴ "Tragical conveniency" includes these elements and yet transcends them by becoming a subtler, more inclusive expression which is both "artful" (complexity of characterization, genre) and "historical" (dialectical sequence of events whose significance may have plural meaning). Answers to political questions are either equivocal or unresolved, no longer conforming to conventional, monistic expectations; the audience is often obliged to make troublesome distinctions between what A. C. Hamilton has termed "the illusion of truth and the allusion to truth."¹⁵ Kingship, in the Shakespearean history play, becomes both the unquestioned ritual continually re-affirmed as a dramatic icon and the troublesome ambiguity of socio-political conduct in its singular importance and isolation, a gesture or episode whose implications are not easily perceived. History cannot be repeated and its symbolic resonance is only a substitute, a temporal compensation for the complexity of a momentary event. Drama re-orchestrates and refines the linear abrasiveness, the uncertainties in making memory conform to the "presentness" of the past. The subtle reformulation of the past into continual expression in the present represents the paradoxical, often subtle fusion of the world and the stage. The self-conscious expression of man's temporal relationship to circumstance is itself an attempt to make a spectacle equal to an event. History can and does become ritualized into drama: the king is dead; long live the king. In a revealing and provocative essay on Shakespeare's histories, Harold Toliver comments on this phenomenon and his remarks are worth quoting at length:

In Shakespeare, the king is both a central dramatic control and a way of incorporating into drama large segments of national history, often in its most turbulent moments. Hence in the king we can often see clearly a critical tension between the raw materials of art and the finished work and can trace the transformation of one into the other. But the king is also a very special kind of raw material: he comes to the playwright already well-disciplined by society's formalistic patterns. He is something of a work of art even before he gains admission to the cast of a play, especially if he has undergone the editing and mythic heightening of a Tudor chronicle. . . . The mythic extensions, insignias, gestures, regalia and formal movement of kingly ceremonies both draw upon the dramatic imagination in their real historical staging and provide models of structural progression that theatrical productions in turn may exploit in accommodating mimesis to dramatic formality. As a highly visible symbol, a king is eminently stageable in a medium so dependent upon pageantry as drama.¹⁶

Thus we must qualify the presumption of "formless" history in several ways: the inherent hieratic ritual of kingship superimposes a preconceived pageant, a re-enactment of the claims and power of sovereignty; it is both objective "act" and subjective "acting." The immutability of the crown confers the ritual repetition of kingship on whoever plays the legitimate part of ruler. The history play in turn becomes an imitation of an imitation, the encapsulated rite of stage-play which exploits and projects the symbolic resonance of history's "reality." The audience of both "shows" becomes the temporal witness to the power of visual and verbal exemplum, the moral and aesthetic lesson of national greatness, the patriotic rationalization per se. Language and gesture, the persuasiveness of myth as the most potent "truth," make the relationship of "stage" and "world" refractory and reciprocal. Toliver's hypothesis, however, also reveals more troubling questions on

what Ernst Kantorowicz has called "the King's Two Bodies."¹⁷ Kingship as historico-dramatic fact functions on two levels. If there is a symmetrical, consonant relationship between stage and throne, there is also a dissonant and discordant expropriation of the title of king: a seminal conflict exists between the "true" king who enacts history's pre-ordained role and the "false" king who acts that same role, often eliciting paradoxical belief, sanctioned only by the power of rhetoric and gesture, not the legitimacy conferred by the political status quo. Shakespeare not only equates theatre and throne, but often equivocates between the two, subverting our expectations and questioning accepted premises.

The complexity with which Shakespeare articulated the tension between the world as theatre and the theatre which represents the world is not difficult to discover. Richard II, the legitimate monarch, becomes at the end of the play only the supreme actor of his role, the poet king of snow. Bolingbroke, the usurper who violates the sacerdotal contract of obedience to kingship, becomes the real and resourceful ruler, making virtu from illegitimacy. "Mark me how I will undo myself," says Richard II as he abdicates crown and throne in a symbolic, self-conscious counter-ritual of investiture¹⁸ (IV.1.203). His self-abnegation fulfills history and drama in one moment. Its importance to the play is crucial and its lesson is replete with contradictions, its visual metaphors and rhetoric ambiguous: the ease and relief with which Richard surrenders the throne indicates unjustified weakness or recognition of insuperable strength in Bolinbroke's forces; the expressiveness of his thoughts reveal either true self-knowledge or the theatricalization of grief, "external manners of lament" (IV.1.296); as effective stage imagery the mirror which Richard

"crak'd in an hundred shivers" (IV.i.289) is either the iconic reflection of his true self, the embodiment of soliloquized guilt, or the vehicle of egoistic projection, a narcissistic "flatt'ring glass" (IV.i.279) which never permits Richard to see beyond subjective rehearsal of sorrow.¹⁹ Numerous instances of this sort can be found in Shakespeare's plays: the dramatist constantly reiterates the equivocal implications of historical acts and postures, whether or not the play's "history" is in fact based on actual chronicle: the passivity which is a mark of saintliness and weakness in Henry VI, the comic villainy of Richard III, the legitimacy of Richard II as opposed to Bolingbroke's strength, Hal's sense of statecraft and royal responsibility as opposed to Falstaff's total indulgence in play. If Shakespeare has become the paradigmatic historical dramatist of the Renaissance, it is because he was implicitly aware of the paradoxical demands made on his art by the confluence of history and tragedy. Certainly the interest we find in his excursions into the uses of the past reveal real choices, thematic and aesthetic, which ultimately cannot be resolved into agreeable or agreed-upon preferences for his audience. Shakespeare's "conveniency" is not expediency; it exploits the theatrical success achieved in his audience's inability to choose private sensibility over public posturing, comic history over historical tragedy, real grief over feigned pathos, prudence over self-sacrifice, anarchic illusion over sacerdotal myth. The incompatibility of "poesy" and history which informs so much of Shakespearean drama is, as will be seen, the nexus to Ford's art as well.

Perkin Warbeck offers a sustained, often troubling commentary on the sincerity of imposture, the illusory freedom of the impersonator-

pretender, a "player-king."²⁰ The fact of Warbeck's presumption is undeniable, but wonder at his absolute intractability persists. Henry can rationalize Warbeck's audacity by believing that his delusive antagonist has learned a part so well as to forget that it is simply an illusion, purely a false persona:

The player's on the stage still, 'tis his part;
 A' does but act . . .
 The lesson, prompted and well conned, was moulded
 Into familiar dialogue, oft rehearsed,
 Till, learnt by heart, 'tis now receiv'd for truth . . .
 The custom, sure, of being styled a king
 Hath fastened in his thought that he is such . . .

(V.ii.68-69, 77-79, 132-133)

Though Henry's political victory is assured, he cannot overcome the perfection of Warbeck's consistency of belief; even those who serve as Warbeck's detractors are compelled to recognize a pretender's insularity to the threats of history, his absolute fidelity to his cause: ". . . impostor beyond precedent. / No chronicle records his fellow" (V.iii.208-209). For Huntly, "just laws ought to proceed"; the Yorkist fraud must be executed, but Warbeck's invulnerability to what others see as justice or conscience only induces amazement in the old man: "I have / Not thoughts left" (V.iii.209-211). Huntly's reaction, paradoxically accepting historical process and intuitively admiring Warbeck's total indifference to history, might well correlate with what is observed throughout the play.

As with previous Fordian tragedies, the central characters assume a self-consciousness of their historical "roles" in a play, and they specifically enjoin their unseen audience to see and learn from the fate of those who are "spectacles to time and pity" (V.i.29). Perkin views

his splendid isolation in death as the surest triumph over cowardice, false confession: "illustrious mention / Shall blaze our names" (V.iii. 206=207). The audience, as the tacit witness to the events on stage which image "truth of state," can and must judge his acts not only by their inherent rightness but by the strength of will which persists in justifying them up to the moment of death. The man whose behavior surpasses "chronicle" paradoxically needs no other "chronicle than truth" and the truth is all his own:

But let the world, as all to whom I am
 This day a spectacle, to time deliver,
 And by tradition fix posterity,
 Without another chronicle than truth,
 How constantly my resolution suffered
 A martyrdom of majesty.

(V.iii.70-75)

The last line of this speech goes to the heart of the dual nature of Perkin's "spectacle." "Majesty" connotes both the authority and power of the crown, its inherent prerogatives, and the posture, aspect or bearing with which the king conducts and projects himself; the word suggests omnipresent rights and responsibilities and contrasts them with the performance they require of the king, the exhibition which an audience sees and judges. A subtle distinction exists, in the contrast of complementary meanings of the word itself, between the qualities and privileges of kingship and the manner, the external impression revealed in exercising them. If the concluding prepositional phrase in this speech is read as subordinate and adjectival, the emphasis is consequently on the exquisite ritual of suffering, an "acted," theatricalized expression of self-sacrifice. However, if rhetorical weight is placed

on the final word as a noun or object of preposition, the focus is on the sacrifice of the most sacred rights and duties of kingship, not simply the style of suffering. Whether the ultimate effect is to concentrate on the proper ornamentation of Perkin's last rites, or to call attention to the specific, sacerdotal violation which is alleged to have occurred, is difficult to tell. The ambivalent sense of the speech makes it clear how sound (the alliterated m in the two words) and sense combine to reinforce a dual perspective on Perkin's "triumph." It is a consummate piece of pageantry in his eyes, precisely because it is the "martyrdom" of the "true" claimant to the throne:

. . . yet can they never
Toss into air the freedom of my birth,
Or disavow my blood Plantagenet's!
I am my father's son still . . .

(IV.ii.10-13)

. . . such advantage
Hath majesty in its pursuit of justice
That on the proppers-up of truth's old throne
It both enlightens counsel and gives heart
To execution; whiles the throats of traitors
Lie bare before our mercy. O divinity
Of royal birth! How it strikes dumb the tongues
Whose prodigality of breath is bribed
By trains to greatness! Princes are but men
Distinguished by the fineness of their frailty,
Yet not so gross in beauty of the mind,
For there's a fire more sacred purifies
The dross of mixture. Herein stand the odds:
Subjects are men on earth, kings men and gods.

(IV.v.51-64)

Perkin's "sincerity" as a true believer is invariably tinged with irony. His "freedom" and "advantage" is, to his detractors, only the license of a madman to believe whatever he wishes, totally insulated from the realities of Tudor politics. To Perkin, however, his "rights"

as a Plantagenet are true obligations and privileges, a "divine" birth-right. The pretender who is totally convinced of his role is always "free" of conscience, never doubting his destiny and never assuming guilt for a crime against the state. Thus if we see Perkin through the eyes of his antagonists, the perspective centers on self-indulgence and incorrigible delusion; if we see Perkin through his own eyes, his "freedom" becomes the only legitimate political cause, the incontrovertibility of "royal birth." This pervasive dichotomy is further reinforced by the consonantal echo of "majesty," and "justice," the nexus between the impressively false rite of kingly posture, and the severe morality of Perkin's claim to the throne, the only path to "truth."

"Majesty," Perkin's energy of imposture, does indeed "prop up" the "throne" of "truth"; the medium becomes the message through personification and artful substitution. Perkin, totally and resolutely convinced of the patrimony denied him, sees only "traitors" in his Tudor enemies; he alone is endowed with the power of absolution. The pretender becomes persuaded by his own volubility; once again sound and sense correlate to enforce the uneasy conjunction of Perkin's sense of history and his personal tragedy: Perkin's "prodigality of breath" is "blazon" of his royal "birth." The subtly alliterated distinction shows how Perkin's speech becomes the perfect surrogate for "truth," the only means available to an impostor for proclaiming "royal birth." There is "fineness" in the artful rhetoric, "frailty" in the perception: any king is but a man, whose humanity is yet more exquisitely refined and purged of error. Perkin's "fineness," however, is more "frail" and tenuous than most in its delusions, paradoxically more tender and less abrasive in

its devotion to private concerns of love and loyalty. The play's preoccupation with inverted metaphors is nowhere better revealed than in Perkin's insistence that the "purification" of kingship makes him "dross": what is ordinarily the residue, the impurity cast off by the refining fire, becomes in Perkin's eyes the inviolable purity of his anointed office.²¹ If he is the pariah of society (what others see as "dross"), he is through his own pretensions more "sacred" (what he sees as "dross"), more sanctified in his fallacious hope by the intensity and commitment with which he expresses it. Yet Perkin is the commonest of commoners, in absolute bifurcation between what he sees himself to be and how he is seen by others. He is the "perfect fool."

The irony of Warbeck's self-revelation is counterpointed by what others see in him and say about him. Henry's retainers excoriate Warbeck's presumptuousness and illegitimacy; he is a "cub" and "gewgaw," "more fit to be a swabber / To the Flemish after a drunken surfeit" (I.i.104, 106, 125-126). The presence of an impostor is both ignoble and threatening, something ridiculous and monstrous. At the midpoint of the play, with Warbeck's future precariously in the balance, Durham persuades James of Scotland to relinquish support of Warbeck and calls attention to Perkin's common birth and sinful intents: the friendship between two legitimate and powerful monarchs is in danger of dissolution because of "a vagabond, a straggler, / Not noted in the world by birth or fame, / An obscure peasant, by the rage of hell / Loosed from his chains to set great kings at strife" (III.iv.17-20). Indeed, the dual image of Warbeck as both absurd and menacing affects Henry himself from the moment the play begins. No reader would doubt the strength or wisdom of this first Tudor

who successfully overcomes Warbeck's challenge, but there is something unsettling about Perkin's persistence which makes even a divinely appointed and sanctioned ruler question such prerogatives, in fact his very identity. If Warbeck is a phantom, surreal and insubstantial, he is not totally a trifle:

Still to be haunted, still to be pursued,
 Still to be frighted with false apparitions
 Of pageant majesty and new-coined greatness,
 As if we were a mockery-king in state,
 Only ordained to lavish sweat and blood
 In scorn and laughter to the ghosts of York,
 Is all below our merits; yet, my lords,
 My friends and counsellors, yet we sit fast
 In our own royal birthright; the rent face
 And bleeding wounds of England's slaughtered people
 Have been by us, as by the best physician,
 At last both thoroughly cured and set in safety;
 And yet for all this glorious work of peace
 Our self is scarce secure.

(I.1.1-14)

Any reader or spectator conversant with English history might possibly have recognized the fragility of Henry's "birthright,"²² though the play's implicit panegyric is equally compelling in its assurance of the "specialty of rule":

The rage of malice
 Conjures fresh spirits with the spells of York;
 For ninety years ten English kings and princes,
 Threescore great dukes and earls, a thousand lords
 And valiant knights, two hundred fifty thousand
 Of English subjects have in civil wars
 Been sacrificed to an uncivil thirst
 Of discord and ambition. This hot vengeance
 Of the just powers above to utter ruin
 And desolation had rained on, but that
 Mercy did gently sheathe the sword of justice
 In lending to this blood-shrunk commonwealth
 A new soul, new birth, in your sacred person . . .
 So just is heaven,
 Him hath your majesty by your own arm,
 Divinely strengthened . . .

For Edward's daughter is Henry's queen,
 A blessed union, and a lasting blessing
 For this poor panting island . . .

(I.1.14-26, 32-34, 38-40)

There is, in the Shakespearean echo of these lines, the reiteration of providential formula and supernatural necessity in the unraveling of national chronicle seen through the design of the dramatist. The pageant of history is retold as reassurance to its most prominent exemplary figure and his on-stage and off-stage audience that the renewal of patriotic will, the fundamental premises of unity and peace, are at hand. There is, it must be added, a typical uneasy balance of the promise of future events with the ill-remembered broils of the past. Personal and public security is verbalized, rehearsed, tentatively accepted as the status quo, the image of prosperity and stability; yet the memory of civil turmoil not only casts a pall over this first scene of the play but "conjures fresh spirits." England is weak, a "poor panting island," vulnerable even to the capricious threat of a pretender. If Henry's accession is a providential act, necessity ministering grace, the conspiracies of Margaret of Burgundy (sister of the Yorkist Edward IV) provide their own infernal miracle, "painted fires" (I.1.43) of surrogate sons of a "woman-monster" (I.1.49), presumably too old and barren to give natural birth. Though there is explicit insistence on Henry's "legality" and divine protection (I.1.72-74, 141), not to mention the "folly" of Perkin's conspiracy (I.1.98-100), there is nonetheless the hint of "infection" (I.1.116), the small but ubiquitous pestilence of sedition, reflected not only in Perkin's external threat, but also within the confines of Westminster; Henry senses a fifth column (I.1.83-84), but

at this point ironically ignores its source in his closest companion Stanley: "We know thou lovest us, and thy heart / Is figured on thy tongue" (I.i.101-102). In its characteristic imagery of equivocation, Stanley's duplicitous purposes are initially revealed ironically through the speech of the man who will eventually feel the pain of betrayal most. The play's first scene thus hinges on the fragile equilibrium established between Warbeck's "shadow" and Henry's "substance,"²³ as the reader-spectator will discover when the full implications of loyalty are revealed in all their complexity.²⁴ If the play asks us to respect the political consequences of Tudor mythology, it conversely asks us to accept Warbeck's disturbing presence, the ambiguous impact of his preposterous claim. All is secure, but nothing is safe. Before the titular figure of the play makes his first entrance (and he will not appear until Act II), his puzzling, intrusive character quickly and decisively becomes an integral part of the play.

In its progression of scenes and incidents, Perkin Warbeck portrays a persistent contrast of charismas in two figures who exhibit, as numerous references make clear, "witchcraft" - black magic (I.i.49-52; I.iii.12-14; I.ii.35; II.iii.3-5; IV.iii.13; V.iii.104-110), and heavenly, "oraculous" power - white magic (I.i.14-42; II.iii.146; III.i.33-36; IV.1.13-16; IV.iv.6-7, 66-67). Both Henry and Perkin elicit defection and loyalty, thus qualifying and modifying what might, in a more simple and straightforward morality drama, be crude abstractions. The way in which other characters perceive Warbeck and Henry not only reveals the differences, often surprising, between an "airy apparition" (I.ii.35) and "England's lawful heir" (II.ii.24), but also something equally important

about the subordinate characters themselves. What in earlier plays of Ford seemed to be fragmentary portraiture now seems more suggestive and expressive, implicitly contrasted to other characters to reveal a patterned technique, ultimately showing all figures in the play as complex, mysterious, and possessing an importance beyond their own transparent selves.

The blatant irony inherent in James' easy acceptance of Warbeck's claim reveals how credulity is simply a metaphor for naivete and also enables the reader-spectator more easily to understand James' equally facile disillusionment and rejection of the pretender's cause. The clue is in what the Scottish king says: "He must be more than subject who can utter / The language of a king, and such is thine" (II.i.102-103). The ominous prophecy of loyalty which follows is indicative of the subtle persuasiveness of Warbeck's disguise and the flimsy premises on which his rhetoric is based. Perkin is, after all, no more and no less than a "king" of language, whose gestures and role-playing define his "royal" identity. If Perkin's speech is specious and his cause spurious, ultimately the worm turns. As Warbeck's "dross" purifies itself of "mixture" (a curious and characteristic confusion of meaning noted earlier), so is James' initial acceptance of Warbeck's claim based on an equally fundamental confusion, seen in the same metaphor: "Dross cannot / Cleave to so pure a metal" (II.iii.74-75). The meaning of "mixture" however, is, as James' subsequent behavior reveals, equivocal and expedient; Warbeck, whose lineage earlier seemed so pure and his motives so sincere, is inevitably expendable in order to redeem his Scottish "brother" from an embarrassing political encumbrance: "He came for refuge; kings come

near in nature / Unto the gods in being touched with pity. / Yet, noble friends, his mixture with our blood, / Even with our own, shall no way interrupt / A general peace . . ." (IV.iii.42-46. As Warbeck's imposture is the perfect act of self-delusion and self-betrayal, so is James' incipient loyalty an illustration of imposture's double-edged sword; easy to persuade and easy to dissuade. It is paradoxical and yet understandable that Perkin's isolation in total allegiance to what only he finally regards as "true" is paralleled by the gullibility and mutability of James' "affections."

If James' relationship with Warbeck makes a vice of expediency, Katharine's bond makes a virtue out of constancy. Warbeck's initial attractiveness to both, however, has its source in what appear to be similar misconceptions about his identity:

Crawford: 'Tis more than strange; my reason cannot answer
Such argument of fine imposture, couch'd
In witchcraft of persuasion, that it fashions
Impossibilities, as if appearance
Could cozen truth itself; this dukeling mushroom
Hath doubtless charmed the king.

Dalyell. A' courts the ladies,
As if his strength of language chained attention
By power of prerogative.

(II.iii.1-8)

Warbeck's daemonic perfection of rhetoric is founded on the absolute inversion of certitude, "truth itself." It is, after all, Warbeck's supreme talent to make language a powerful substitute for "prerogative." Katharine herself notices this: "Beshrew me, but his words have touched me home / As if his cause concerned me; I should pity him / If a' should prove another than he seems" (II.i.118-120). The consequences of Katharine's loyalty, however, involve a different, ultimately more

enduring kind of "pity." What turns out to be superficial acquiescence for James is at the same time the supreme virtue of necessity for Katharine. Her marriage to Warbeck is initially a marriage de conuenance to cement the alliance between two partners in a military alliance and it is, despite James' denial, an "intrusion on private love" (II.iii.58-59) of Katharine's suitor Dalyell. Thus the marriage is presented as a violation of two predominant values: proper judgment as to "legitimacy" of blood and birthright and the need for sincere private affection within and between men and women. That this marriage ultimately embodies self-sacrifice and purity of feeling underlines once more the curious thematic-aesthetic pattern of the play.

"I am your wife; / No human power can or shall divorce / My faith from duty" (IV.iii.101-103): constancy is the most egregious and misunderstood virtue in Perkin Warbeck and it is of considerable value to see how it connects the political and romantic elements of the play. We have previously observed, through the perspective of several characters, the ambiguous nature of Warbeck's claim to the throne, both foolish and wondrous. An invulnerability to rational admission of guilt is simply susceptibility to delusion and a curious profile in courage; Perkin can suffer freely without knowledge of blame and his absolute sense of self-credibility induces only incredulity. Constancy, however, is a means of asserting Warbeck's humanity and vulnerability as well: his genuine compassion and devotion to his wife, transcending the sordid political considerations which initially governed his marriage, compels belief in his selfless concern for her welfare even when his cause is lost. Katharine becomes the catalyst for personal self-sacrifice in Warbeck,

Dalyell, and Huntly, as well as the personified contrast to the cynicism and expediency of Henry, James, and Frion.

Even in the most intimate moments of Katharine and Warbeck, an impending sense of desolation and destruction is evoked. A nocturnal scene (III.ii.) before a crucial test of Warbeck's military strength contrasts the lyrical, fragile gentility of feeling with the previous arbitrary circumstances of their marriage and impending allusions to funerals and fear (III.ii.156, 159, 182). The preciousness and precariousness of true feeling is continually juxtaposed against the jarring, explosive political and military conflicts which invariably threaten to consume it. In the scene immediately following (III.iii.), the reader-spectator is invited to contrast the moving and sincere expression of affection and loyalty between Warbeck and Katharine with the sinister and resourceful maneuvering of Henry and Hialas, the Spanish ambassador. Hialas is both Henry's emissary on a secret mission to persuade James to renounce Warbeck's cause and the go-between in another, purely political alliance of marriage between Henry's son Arthur and the Spanish princess Catherine of Aragon. As the previous scene of private communion between Warbeck and his wife contrasts with his strange constancy to a lost cause, this scene, manipulative and clandestine, shows that same virtue of constancy in marriage prostituted to serve political purposes. For Warbeck "an equal pledge of troths" (II.iii.88) expresses emotions which transcend the prosaic arrangements dictated by considerations of state; for Henry those arrangements constitute the beginning of the end for Warbeck, when the promise of a dynastic union has as its ultimate effect James' abandonment of his erstwhile ally.

In the final scene of the play, Ford discloses the consequences to his dual perspective on romance and politics. Warbeck, scorned and humiliated by his captors, is yet emboldened by Katharine's unwavering love and sees that the example of that love "hast outdone belief" (V.iii.95) and that the sincerity of her passion supersedes Henry's political victory (V.iii.102). Warbeck's judgment by history represents the nadir of his fortunes, but it is paradoxically at that moment when his exemplary courage is most strongly expressed. Marriage, which had previously symbolized external considerations of state, becomes the consummation of personal triumph, the achievement of happiness beyond death. Warbeck's dream-like imposture, his delusive inversion of truth to subvert his own knowledge of the past, now becomes insignificant by contrast. Wedded love now expresses the reality of true, inviolable human relationships, indivisible in perfect unity:

For when the holy churchman joined our hands,
 Our vows were real then; the ceremony
 Was not in apparition, but in act.
 Be what these people term thee, I am certain
 Thou art my husband, no divorce in heaven
 Has been sued out between us; 'tis injustice
 For any earthly power to divide us;
 Or we will live or let us die together.
 There is a cruel mercy.

(V.iii.113-121)

The concluding oxymoron gives apt testimony to Katharine's ambivalent triumph. A concluding ceremonial kiss visualizes the transcendence of feeling which expresses Warbeck's kingship over death. The "pity" with which others regard his execution represents the equivocal presence he has cast over the play, a dual image of pathos and strength, self-delusion and self-respect. Huntly's concluding words to his doomed

son-in-law express "the wonder of your frailty, / Which keeps so firm a station" (V.iii.173-174). We might say as much of Katharine, whose characterization humanizes the folly of Warbeck's absurd pretense and which arbitrarily enjoins the audience on and off stage to temper their abuse with respect that paradoxically surpasses understanding. Love and politics in Perkin Warbeck are totally inseparable and totally independent, qualifying and displacing the reactions of the reader-spectator so that crucial reactions invariably involve a union of opposing feelings.

I have previously alluded to the importance of Henry VII and James of Scotland in any consideration of Perkin's characterization, but it may be useful at this point briefly to summarize their role in the play. They are the positive symbols of legitimacy and power beside which Perkin has neither birthright nor the ability to exercise it. "The use of time / Is thriving safety, and a wise prevention / Of ills expected," says Henry (IV.iv.96-98), and both he and James know how to profit from time, while Perkin is ultimately destroyed by it. James all too easily accepts Perkin's credentials, but Henry never wavers in his belief that the Warbeck rebellion is based on total imposture. James unwittingly becomes the catalyst for the strongest bond of feeling in the play, while Henry serves as the agent of its destruction. If James is capable of the heroism of single combat (IV.iii.), he also knows how to look after his own interests when he becomes convinced that Warbeck's cause is not worth the sacrifice it demands. Henry's strength is tempered with mercy (his pardon to the multitude of Warbeck's followers and his gentle treatment of Katharine and Dalyell), but he knows the propagandistic value of cruel and unusual punishment to the ringleaders of the rebellion:

. . . no; on them our justice
 Must frown in terror; I will not vouchsafe
 An eye of pity to them. Let false Audley
 Be drawn upon an hurdle from the Newgate
 To Tower Hill in his own coat of arms
 Painted on paper, with the arms reversed,
 Defaced and torn; there let him lose his head.
 The lawyer and blacksmith shall be hanged,
 Quartered, their quarters into Cornwall sent,
 Examples to the rest . . .

(III.1.929-101)

If Henry seems the agent of providential justice and the possessor of miraculous powers, all of his political and military success is due to perception in judgment, shrewdness in assessing his antagonists, subtle knowledge of his royal "brother" James' weaknesses. For James "Compassion / Is one rich jewel that shines in our crown" (II.1.32-33), but it is not difficult to discover how easily his "magnanimity" to Warbeck can be bought. Warbeck's simplicity of purpose and idealization of motive cannot survive against cunning and calculation; on the other hand, his greater nobility cannot disguise the fact that he is at the same time the symbolic threat to sanctioned monarchy, the apparition of treason. The assurance of his royal antagonists in knowing the use of power simply accentuates his weakness. If we must admire Perkin's persistence in futility, we must also respect (and perhaps fear) James and Henry's absolute mastery of the art of policy.

The role of the other subordinate characters in the play further reinforces Ford's careful articulation of romance and politics in Perkin Warbeck, with the two elements both reciprocating and opposing each other. Katharine's politically necessitous marriage to Warbeck not only produces the paradoxically ennobling joy of true affection and communion but also leaves in its wake a disappointed father (Huntly) and suitor

(Dalyell). From the moment this subsidiary narrative is introduced in the play (I.ii.4-5), there is a recurrent conflict between "earnest love" (what Dalyell perceives to be his own sincere emotions) and "too much ill-placed mirth" (what Dalyell believes to be Huntly's reaction to those emotions). Katharine is compelled to marry, against the wishes of father and rival suitor, a man who appears to be of noble birth but who, as time reveals, is no more than base born. Even though Dalyell is a true-blooded nobleman, his lineage and lack of a suitable fortune is too far beneath a "princess of the blood" (I.ii.26) to make him acceptable. His appeal refused, the patent absurdity of his affection seems all too clear to him: "'Twere as good / I were reduced to clownery, to nothing, / As to a throne of wonder" (I.ii.40-42). There is, of course, an ironic contradiction in Dalyell's sense of failure, his reach exceeding his grasp, with Perkin's own "throne of wonder," a figment of the imagination, a mockery claim to a royal birthright.

Other problems compound this complex situation. Huntly's concealed preference for Dalyell, his admiration for the young man's perseverance and candor, is subtly contrasted with Dalyell's clandestine feelings for Katharine and the illusion that she is "free and allowed" (I.ii.58). A brief, flawed courtship scene immediately ensues, and Huntly's dissonant, querulous commentary simply makes Dalyell's efforts all the more agonizing:

How, how? How's that? Embolden?
Encourage? I encourage ye? d'ye hear, sir?
A subtle trick, a quaint one - will you hear, man?
What did I say to you? Come, come, to th' point.

(I.ii.89-92)

Huntly ultimately allows his daughter to choose freely; he remains neutral, though caught between his growing respect for Dalyell and his fear that any proposed union violates social decorum and common sense. Instead of resolving the dilemma, Huntly's reaction reinforces the tension of these juxtaposed, conflicting emotions:

My lord of Dalyell, young in years, is old
 In honours; but nor eminent in titles
 Or in estate, that may support or add to
 The expectation of thy fortunes. Settle
 Thy will and reason by a strength of judgement;
 For, in a word, I give thee freedom; take it.
 If equal fates have not ordained to pitch
 Thy hopes above my height, let not thy passion
 Lead thee to shrink mine honour in oblivion.
 Thou art mine own; I have done.

(I.ii.115-124)

Katharine's response is equally ambiguous, showing both respect for her father and tactful compliment for Dalyell, characteristically equivocating in her attitude to the responsibilities and privileges of the aristocracy: "I nor admire nor slight them" (I.ii.136). Warbeck is not the only person who can employ skillful rhetoric to extricate himself from a delicate situation:

My worthiest lord and father, the indulgence
 Of your sweet composition thus commands
 The lowest of obedience; you have granted
 A liberty so large that I want skill
 To choose without direction of example:
 From which I dally learn, by how much more
 You take off from the roughness of a father,
 By so much more I am engaged to tender
 The duty of a daughter . . .
 To you, my lord of Dalyell, I address
 Some few remaining words: the general fame
 That speaks your merit, even in vulgar tongues
 Proclaims it clear; but in the best, a precedent . . .
 I value mine own worth at higher rate
 'Cause you are pleased to prize it; if the stream

Of your protested service, as you term it,
 Run in a constancy more than a compliment,
 It shall be my delight that worthy love
 Leads you to worthy actions, and these guide ye
 Richly to wed an honourable name . . .

(I.ii.126-134, 142-145, 147-153)

This is an adroit, even virtuosic, performance and reveals how the power of language can enforce stalemate as it tries to circumvent it. Katharine evokes metaphors of procreation, strange enough when she is attempting to forestall any immediate preference for Dalyell, but she is careful nonetheless to avoid any explicit connection to herself; Dalyell may conceivably wed "an honourable name" other than her own to produce "glorious issue," but that person is not necessarily Katharine herself (I.ii.153, 157). The scene concludes with a typically graceful evasion of present exigencies, the seductive eloquence of Katharine's "perfumed air" (I.ii.169):

To the present motion
 Here's all that I dare answer: when a ripeness
 Of more experience and some use of time
 Resolves to treat the freedom of my youth
 Upon exchange of troths, I shall desire
 No surer credit of a match with virtue
 Than such as lives in you; meantime my hopes are
 Preserved secure in having you a friend.

(I.ii.159-166)

There are ironic consequences to Katharine's caution; time destroys what frail promise remains for her and Dalyell. Her "freedom," like Perkin's, is elusive and deceptive. No firm assurance whatsoever is given to Dalyell: "such" equivocates between the hope of a marriage to him or someone who possesses his excelling virtues. The "hearty love" (I.ii.174) which this scene purports to show subtly conceals the tenuous

commitments of these three characters, their enigmatic responses to each other. The sudden appearance of Crawford reminds them and the reader-spectator that the insistent demands of history can and will intrude decisively on this stalemated parley. Private hopes are sacrificed when "times have their changes" (I.ii.186). Dalyell's indefatigable loyalty ends here only in the promise of an uncertain future as loyalty is its own reward. Dalyell may be a "rare unexampled pattern of a friend" to Katharine (IV.v.117), but he earns little compensation for such service, when we recall the ease of Perkin's "courtship," facilitated by royal decree.

The failure of Dalyell and Huntly to prevent Katharine's marriage to Warbeck is balanced by their insight into Warbeck's true identity as choric commentators who act as a critical perspective on the play. They do not trust James' "instinct of sovereignty" (II.iii.42), and intuitively suspect Warbeck's claim as fraudulent. Their grief at the wedding of Katharine and Warbeck contrasts with the pervading joy at the solemn rite (III.ii.). Huntly himself warns of the ominous consequences in the pledge of two unequal troths (II.iii.66-67) and Dalyell declares that "my hopes are in their ruins" (II.iii.102). Both, however, remain passively obedient to James (III.ii.57ff.) and Warbeck, and the death of Perkin leaves them both speechless at its supreme act of sacrifice and their acknowledgement of the fitness of his penalty (V.iii.182, 209-210). Warbeck is a counterfeit, but an audacious and curiously sympathetic one. They see the future accurately but cannot renounce allegiance to a lost cause. If their contribution to the play has been well served, they are, like Enobarbus in Antony and Cleopatra, faithful doubters, hopelessly

attracted and disillusioned by the lost cause they regretfully support, minor characters who possess wisdom denied the central protagonist.

Though Warbeck's rebellion represents the pre-eminent conspiracy of the play, the presence of several surrogate intriguers once again illustrates Ford's skill in using multiple characterization to elicit plural reactions to the "truth" of the play. The resourcefulness with which Henry VII combats Warbeck's threat to the realm is partially offset by his momentary insecurity at Warbeck's sheer energy of impersonation (I.1) and also by his real distress when he realizes he has been betrayed by his closest companion Stanley:

My chamberlain, my counsellor, the love,
The pleasure of my court, my bosom friend,
The charge and controlment of my person,
The keys and secrets of my treasury,
The all of all I am! I am unhappy,
Misery of confidence - let me turn traitor
To mine own person, yield my sceptre up
To Edward's sister and her bastard duke! . . .
He never failed me; what have I deserved
To lose this good man's heart, or he his own?

(I.iii.105-112, 118-119)

Stanley's conspiracy and its consequences represent a subtle indication of internal treachery as an occasional counterpoint to the usual sense of control and foresight exhibited by Henry. To Henry and his followers Perkin always seems in the end a ludicrous play-actor and can be dealt with accordingly, but Stanley's disloyalty can and does make Henry doubt his own identity, in the sheer surprise elicited by Warbeck's presumption (I.i.4). Stanley is Warbeck's fellow conspirator within the gates of the palace and the momentary fear elicited by the treason of a trusted counselor contrasts with the insistent, ubiquitous shadow which Warbeck

casts on the play. Henry's agonized thoughts about security and the failure of friendship do not prevent the proper public and expedient gestures and speech. Stanley's treason is noticeably unsettling and yet the catalyst for Henry's pity and mercy (II.ii.10ff.), his hasty rationalization that absolute trust corrupts absolutely ("'Twould scarce have served his turn without the whole" - II.ii.38) and his questionable sentiment in mourning "the loss of one whom I esteemed a friend" (II.ii.41). Stanley, like Warbeck, induces paradoxical emotions in those to whom his disloyalty is a threat as it undermines Henry's trust in his lieutenants and strikes at the heart of his safety, while not entirely erasing the sympathy we feel for a disaffected man who resolutely pays the consequences for his misdeed.

The play's persistent questioning of the meaning of "loyalty" insures that even such minor characters as Clifford, Simnel and Frion are not above suspicion. Clifford serves Henry's cause (and perhaps his own) in betraying Stanley, but his sense of "infected honour" (I.iii.34) in the witness he bears against the king's most trusted advisor makes his own confession of fealty all the more troubling:

Let my weak knees rot on the earth
 If I appear as leprous in my treacheries
 Before your royal eyes, as to mine own
 I seem a monster by my breach of truth...
 I must break
 A most unlawful oath to keep a just one.

(I.iii.21-24, 73-74)

The suggestion of decay and disease here is revealing and important. There is a strong sense of Clifford's contrition and humility in the exercise of conscience, but the self-disgust as revealed in the unusually

harsh imagery may also connote his feeling that the betrayal is unjustified and inhuman. Motives other than honesty compel him to kiss Henry's hand "with a greediness" (I.iii.27). The acute sense of horror at Stanley's treachery conditions Henry's impression that Clifford may be operating from the same motives:

<u>Henry.</u>	View well my face, sirs; is there blood left in it?	Urswick, the light!
<u>Durham.</u>	You alter strangely, sir.	
<u>Henry.</u>	Why, Clifford stabbed me, or I dreamed a' stabbed me, Sirrah, it is a custom with the guilty To think they set their own stains off by laying Aspersions on some nobler than themselves. Lies wait on treasons, as I find it here. Thy life again is forfeit... .	Alter, lord bishop?

(I.iii.87-95)

The ambivalent implications of this scene represent what the reader-spectator has come to expect from dramatic equations which express complex, confusing motivations and behavior. Perkin, foolish yet self-sacrificing, threatens and amuses his royal antagonist. James believes Perkin's "story" and abandons the Warbeck rebellion with equal facility. Huntly and Dalryell distrust Warbeck, yet follow him to the end. Katharine confesses unswerving devotion to a loving husband-impostor and can at the same time neatly side-step the pressing demands of father and suitor through the etiquette of equivocation.

The execution of Stanley (II.iii) is an additional reiteration of these "strange truths." The conspiracy of a trusted friend is cruel, the severest test to Henry's sense of invulnerability, yet it also reveals the consummate skill of a master politician who will never suffer the consequences of betrayal. Clifford's anguish in testifying against

Stanley reveals both the characteristic torment in choosing loyalty to a king over loyalty to friend, but cannot erase lingering doubt that his ostensible patriotism is no more than a clear illustration of the maxim that "every man is nearest to himself" (II.ii.51). Though Henry seems to want mercy for a man he still regards as "my chamberlain" (II.ii.1), it is a tentative, incipient "hope" (II.ii.13), quashed by the clear proof of Stanley's "confession" of guilt which is, as Durhan passionately declares, an insidious affront to the security of state: ". . . if it be not treason in the highest, / Then we are traitors all, perjured and false, / Who have took oath to Henry and the justice of Henry's title" (II.ii.18-21). What appears to be a deliberate rehearsal of the opposing virtues of stricture and compassion in Henry results, however, in a more curious formulation of "charity," in which prudent rationalization of Stanley's guilt is suddenly "clear" to Henry, and the king expeditiously withdraws from the stage. Any judgment as to whether or not Henry "is composed of gentleness" (II.ii.50) depends on the degree of irony perceived in this scene. If Stanley is both a "friend close treasured in his bosom" (II.ii.64) and a proven traitor, Clifford is both a loyal servant of the crown and a Judas who wears "a state-informer's character" (II.ii.90), strikingly evident in the cross made on his face with Stanley's finger. "The Christian's badge, the traitor's infamy" (II.ii.86) visually connotes Clifford's ignominious triumph, an unsettling commentary on the ambiguous nature of political allegiance in Perkin Warbeck. The burden of conscience is now, of course, all on Clifford, "the only evidence 'gainst Stanley's head" (II.ii.116). Henry, on stage again, provokes Clifford's sense of remorse by asking if he is pleased with

Stanley's execution and then banishes his "loyal" nobleman peremptorily from court with only an obscure promise of reward. If Clifford's compensation seems close to punishment and Henry's friendship is so politic, it is only because the play's insistence on complicated and sometimes insoluble action and rhetoric makes such judgments necessary and inevitable. How can conventional moral and aesthetic expectations be satisfied, if the contradictory responses evoked by the play make such expectations subject to qualification and revision?

Simmel and Frion, ignoble defectors though they are, also become dramatic vehicles for expressing the play's shadowy "truths" about men and affairs of state. Frion seems to be no more than a cunning opportunist who, like James, remains loyal to Warbeck so long as it serves his purpose. Contemptuous of Perkin and his pitiful band of followers, he finally abandons the failed adventure "too much familiar with the fox" (Iv.iii.147), as Perkin himself observes. Lambert Simmel is, like Perkin, a Yorkist pretender whose earlier rebellion is equally a failure, but not before he is bought off by Henry's offer of service in the royal household. A "spectacle of ruin" (I.i.95), Lambert the self-styled impostor is living proof of the benefit of changed loyalties, the fruitless purpose of conspiracy. Unlike Perkin, Lambert acknowledges himself to be a pretender; he is a man that would live and Henry's mercy insures "surety of obedience to his service" (V.iii.43). It is Lambert who reveals the most explicit denial of Perkin's lineage,²⁵ the facts which make continued imposture absurd:

You would be Dick the Fourth; very likely!
Your pedigree is published; you are known

For Osbeck's son of Tournay, a loose runagate,
 A landloper. Your father was a Jew,
 Turned Christian merely to repair his miseries.
 Where's now your kingship?

(V.iii.22-27)

And yet Lambert is, like Clifford, a "state-informer," whose willingness to admit falsehood is proportional to an obvious desire to escape the severest consequences of his crime. If Perkin's judgment of Lambert seems beside the point, it also questions Lambert's mixed motives in supporting Henry's title:

Hold, my heart-strings, whiles contempt
 Of injuries, in scorn, may bid defiance
 To this base man's foul language. Thou poor vermin,
 How darest thou creep so near me? thou an earl?
 Why, thou enjoy'st as much of happiness
 As all the swinge of slight ambition flew at.
 A dunghill was thy cradle. So a puddle
 By virtue of the sunbeams breathes a vapour
 To infect the purer air, which drops again
 Into the muddy womb that first exhaled it.
 Bread and a slavish ease, with some assurance
 From the base beadle's whip, crowned all thy hopes.

(V.iii.53-64)

Nowhere else in the play does the usually restrained and dignified Perkin indulge in such excoriation, such degrading epithets. Of all the characters in the play, Lambert most paradoxically resembles Perkin in the repetition of an ill-fated venture founded on a hoax, but the abject servility of Perkin's surrogate "Yorkist" partner elicits nothing but bitter contempt. Pardon must seem extraordinarily generous to a self-confessed traitor, but to one never convinced of the spuriousness of his claims, it is no more than the deepest of insults. The clash of sensibilities here points out the inextricable emotions associated with Perkin Warbeck: the play's political morality always seems

to reflect poorly on its duplicitous spokesmen and its personal morality seems to ennoble even the most deluded and seditious of men. Consistency of purpose, no matter how impractical or illogical, can and does transcend interests of state, as the pitiful and noble qualities in Perkin unhesitatingly ask his supreme sacrifice. This undeniable conflict between history and tragedy often demands alteration in our moral and aesthetic pre-conceptions, as the protective adjustment of "loyal" citizens cannot always surpass the destructive and heroic impulse toward self-abnegation. Simnel survives the play but Perkin "lives" beyond it, king over death.

There is comparatively little attention to complexities of genre in the play: in the Prologue (11.23-24) Ford declares that the restraint and seriousness demanded of a historical subject indicate "no unnecessary mirth forced." If no integral parodies of the action exist as consistently developed sub-plot, some elements of grotesquerie and foolishness in subsidiary narrative do exist. The function of Warbeck's band of followers - Heron, John a-Water, Skelton, and Astley - is easily recognized by Henry's supporters, the Scottish court, even Perkin's sometime accomplice Frion:

Clifford. Never had counterfeit
Such a confused rabble of lost bankrupts
For counsellors.

(I.iii.55-57)

Countess Their godfathers
May be beholding to them, but their fathers
Scarce owe them thanks

(I.i.11-13)

Frion. O, the toil
Of humouring this abject scum of mankind!

Muddy-brained peasants! Princes feel a misery
 Beyond impartial sufferance, whose extremes
 Must yield to such abettors. . .

(II.iii.181-185)

Whether or not their comic role in the play is historically or dramatically justified,²⁶ these four foolish camp-followers elicit both ridicule and contempt which parallels in a minor key that which seems directed at Warbeck as well, and their presence is a constant reminder of the precarious state of his enterprise, misdirected and deluded. No allowances need be made for the sketchiness or clumsiness with which they are conceived, but attention should be paid to the way their presence in the play expresses the disturbing dilemma of the central protagonist. The paucity of artistic means used to articulate them should not detract from their thematic importance to the play, even in outline or residue.

Sometimes these flimsy "noblemen" appear as silent witnesses to a serious event, such as Perkin's initial presentation of his credentials to James of Scotland (II.i), the marriage of Warbeck and Katharine (II.iii), James' desertion of Warbeck (III.iv; IV.iii), and Warbeck's capture and execution (V.iii). In all such scenes these ill-assorted misfits serve a simple and unmistakable visual function as grotesque counterpart to the strained seriousness of Warbeck; they become an inverted emblem of the absurdity of his mission, the part of himself that he forever refuses to acknowledge. Unlike Katharine, whose total loyalty to Warbeck transcends any belief in his assumed title, their very existence in the play depends on the precarious and distant hopes necessary to make that title real and powerful.

What these men say may ultimately be as important as what they

tacitly symbolize, if a serious look at what purports to be gibberish is permitted. They first speak (II.iii) as Perkin prepares to celebrate his newly-made alliances with Katharine and James. Of all the moments in the play, this is the time when Perkin's cause seems to have any chance of realization, and the conversation of his four motley retainers becomes a commentary in symbolic terms on Perkin's present and future hopes, revealing the play's ubiquitous irony of language and situation. Heron remarks that "I was ever confident, when I traded but in remnants, that my stars had reserved me to the title of a viscount at least" (II.iii.109-111), but his hopes are as frail as the patches he tailors. The sense of "patching" can possess another meaning as Astley speaks in artful blunder of the legal term of indenture: "For as no indenture but has its counterpawne, no overint but his condition or defeasance, so no right but may have claim, no claim but may have possession, any act of parliament to the contrary notwithstanding" (II.iii.118-121). The verbal connection here is subtle and intricate. The hopes of Perkin and his tattered band are a patchwork of specious suppositions, as poor clothes and copies of an indenture are cut out of motley parts. Furthermore, the train of Astley's thought, which can make the equation of "rights," "claims" and "possessions" contravene legal statute, represents the quintessential anarchy inherent in Perkin's scheme, which sees, hears, and speaks no evil in itself. Frail hopes become transformed into the disordered, totally self-indulgent sense of justice that only a pretender and his "bankrupt" rabble can possess.

The adroitly mishandled proverbial wisdom of Perkin's followers clearly reflects their total subversion of rational thought and conduct:

"Little said is soon amended" (IV.ii.68); "To be much troublesome was to be wise and busy" (IV.ii.86). There is persistent self-irony in the most unconscious aspersions in their rudimentary "wisdom"; as with Shakespeare's examples of Aguecheek and Dogberry, ignorance passes for insight and sometimes transcends it. At one point Skelton offers to "let my skin be punched full of eye-let holes with the bodkin of derision" (II.iii.144-145), but none of Perkin's infantile followers ever feels the effect of cruelty and they suffer without knowing why so little compassion is lavished on them, either by the other characters or the dramatist himself. What should not be ignored, however, is their paradoxical ability to express the seminal idea(s) of the play, albeit upside-down. At the conclusion of Perkin Warbeck, when Henry's triumph is assured and Perkin's death is imminent, it remains for John a-Water to express what the audience has continually felt as an impasse in resolving the play; the curious blend of fatality and inevitable reversal which views Perkin's end as both expected and puzzling becomes paradoxically "clear":

Under your good favours, as men are men, they may err. For I confess, respectively, in taking great parts, the one side prevailing, the other side must go down. Herein the point is clear, if the proverb hold that hanging goes by destiny, that it is to little purpose to say, this thing or that shall be thus or thus; for as the fates will have it, so it must be, and who can help it? . . . Every man knows what is best, as it happens. For my own part, I believe it is true, if I be not deceived, that kings must be kings and subjects subjects. But which is which - you shall pardon me for that; whether we speak or hold our peace, all are mortal, no man knows his end.

(V.ii.104-111; 113-118)

Thus the events of Perkin Warbeck are willed by human delusion in opposition to the fateful dictates of providence. The passive acquiescence of Perkin's ragged band contrasts with his own aggressive pursuit of destiny, his own willful courting of disaster. The message of poor simpletons is both beside the point and all to the point. The clash of two impregnable wills - Perkin's privately intuited illusion and Henry's publicly sanctioned resolution - is assured when the normal distinctions which divide kings and subjects is totally reversed. John a-Water only expresses the muddle continually intensified by "impudence in forgery": the more things change for the worse, the more Perkin remains the same; as the play progresses towards increasing hopelessness, the consequences of failure must be endured stoically and obediently. If the comedy in these pitiful characters seems abortive and obscure, there is something to be said for what they have implicitly revealed about the play's backward grasp of truth. They accept uncritically what the reader-spectator struggles to understand rationally in dialectic and paradox; for them as for Perkin, the time is free. They are absolved of all responsibility because they could never conceive of what it is; through their ingenuous eyes, the most disturbing elements of the play coalesce; the rhetoric of folly, the plaything of a child or fool, becomes the emblematic expression of the symmetrical cross-purposes of tragedy and history.

Ford's talent for metaphorical invention is a slender appendage to a more formidable gift in revealing theme through character and equivocal rhetoric. As our discussion of previous plays has revealed, visual and verbal imagery are often confined to one dominant pattern or

motif. Whether this phenomenon represents conscious restraint or unavoidable lack of imagination is not as important as the way Ford makes the fabric and process of language correlate with and comment on the ideological content of the play. The most explicit imagistic pattern is a connection established between two opposing senses of what "blood" means: on the one hand, it connotes violence, anarchy, destruction of human life and civil order, the painful and wasteful legacy of history; on the other hand, it also suggests the preoccupation with legitimacy, inheritance, ancestry and title characteristic of the confusion aroused by false claims of patrimony and illusions of sovereignty. Ford constantly plays these meanings against each other, in a carefully articulated design throughout the play, often without resolving the tension such a dialectic symbolizes.

In the first scene of Perkin Warbeck there is an explicit verbal contrast between the cruel joke of blood being shed to appease "the scorn and laughter" of "ghosts" which is demeaning to the strength and propriety of Henry's cause and the tentative redemption promised by such sacrifice of the "bleeding wounds of England's slaughtered people" (I.i. 5, 19). The suggestion of national impotence is balanced and qualified by the presumed future dynasty of the Tudors, threatened and made resolute by the enfeeblement of "this blood-shrunk commonwealth" (I.i.25). The constant equivocation between Henry's assurance and insecurity is nowhere better revealed than in the exploration of his need to establish order and his uneasy memory of what his efforts have cost, "a most bloody purchase" (I.i.30): here is observed clearly the first undoubted link between the violence of civil disorder and the frail legal premise on

which such claims to the throne are based. "Purchase" implies a title claimed by force, not inheritance,²⁷ the spurious heritage of Edward IV; from this subtle equation of two disparate meanings comes the play's central problem: rebellion founded on a false claim to the crown. Conspiracy is "more than a fear, a terror," precisely because "men of blood and fortunes" are in league with impostors (I.i.90,88). As will be observed, James and Warbeck represent this uneasy and threatening alliance.

In the second scene of the play, Ford constructs a variation on his theme of "blood": Dalyell aspires to win Katharine's hand, but even his claim to nobility, dimly remembered, cannot win "the piece of royalty that is stitched up / In . . . Kate's blood" (I.ii.16-17). The irony is clear in Dalyell's sense of distance from "a princess of the blood" (I.ii. 27) when compared to the easily arranged marriage between Katharine and the feigned royal "blood" of Perkin. The play's characteristic ambiguity is expressed in contradictory iteration: false prince and true princess marry, their political fortunes served by a counterfeit identity, their personal feelings transcending that identity. Perkin's true affection for Katharine exists despite the absolute difference in their lineage; their growing isolation in loyalty to each other contrasts markedly with the dissolution of Perkin's conspiracy.

The sacrament of marriage, as of kingship, is inviolable; the union of dissimilar "bloods" resists the encroachment of defeat even when Perkin's belief in the sanctity of his own "blood" makes separation inevitable and permanent. For Perkin, his "true story" elicits only the "compassion" of "bleeding souls" (II.i.55-56), but the sacrifice of those who must die in his name can only summon the grim reality of "pity" shown

by those who mourn in their behalf. Perkin's "story" as related to King James (II.i.) is a chronicle of blood and betrayal, but will be repeated with real and immediate consequences as the play progresses. Huntly sees through Perkin's falsity and equates the marriage of his daughter with the perilous fortunes of Warbeck's questionable mission:

. . . . Let me be a dotard,
 A bedlam, a poor sot, or what you please
 To have me, so you will not stain your blood,
 Your own blood, royal sir, though mixed with mine,
 By marriage of this girl to a straggler! . . .
 Some of thy subjects' hearts,
 King James, will bleed for this!

(II.iii.31-35, 66-67)

For Perkin, marriage and his own cause have become practically inextricable, symbolizing the absolute certainty of feeling and total insulation to the intrusion of all opponents of wedded love:

For love and majesty are reconciled
 And vow to crown thee empress of the West . . .
 But we will live,
 Live, beauteous virtue, by the lively test
 Of our own blood, to let the counterfeit
 Be known the world's contempt.

(III.ii.161-162, 169-172)

"We" suggests both Perkin's commitment to his royal identity and his sense of inseparability to Katharine. His invariable retreat into both marriage and politics, his incontrovertible belief in his "blood" of inheritance and "blood" of affection continually reaffirms the perpetuity of both these loyalties. As the play evolves, Perkin's fervent defense of these two prerogatives conflicts with the harsh reminders of the sacrifice required to uphold and discredit his claim, imaged in blood (III.i.3, 35, 70, 84; III.iv.8, 36, 102; IV.i.22-25).

As Ford ultimately discloses, however, the most compelling sacrifice is that of Warbeck himself; slaughter is averted by negotiation and surreptitious contract: James will appear magnanimous because "no blood of innocents shall buy my peace" (IV.iii.34), yet the Scottish king has no scruples in prudently divorcing himself from a man he once thought "not base in blood" (IV.iii.39): "His mixture with our blood, / Even with our own, shall no way interrupt / A general peace" (IV.iii.44-45). In the end, Henry is "victorious without bloodshed" (V.i.61), but the requital for such mercy is Perkin's mortality. If Ford succeeds in avoiding "the waste and prodigal / Effusion of so much guiltless blood" (IV.i.22-23), he cannot ignore the painful waste and heroic sacrifice implicit in Perkin's passage beyond affliction and defeat: "my heart / Will mount till every drop of blood be frozen / By death's perpetual winter" (V.ii.53-55). There is remarkable restraint, almost stasis, in Perkin's final moments; the quickening pulse of life which has so energized his earlier movements now is transformed into a kind of frozen grandeur. The distortion of his own "blood" is the catalyst for the potential destruction of a "blood-shrunk commonwealth," yet such futility paradoxically ensures the still-born, silent perfection of Perkin's personal apocalypse. All contrivances which presumably make Perkin's end the ignoble climax to delusive dreams in fact make his existential act memorable, surpassing explanation and judgment. Rational detachment from absurdity ordinarily sequesters the reader-spectator from supra-rational claims of self-sacrifice and total integrity, but in Perkin Warbeck, neither perspective by itself is entirely sufficient. The verbal contours of the play continually reinforce its dual meanings, its congenital equivocation which makes its plural

effects hopelessly opposed, yet necessary to make each other clear.

The Epilogue attempts to clarify the multiple themes of the play, what Ford sought to achieve "in a several fashion" (1.1). Nothing reveals the true design of Perkin Warbeck more clearly than its paradoxical insistence on the contradictions inherent in the political and romantic conventions of the history play. In "the threats of majesty, the strength of passion" (1.2), Ford opposes a strong and prudent monarch, the symbol of order and historical necessity, and an imprudent, willfully beguiled impostor, whose absolute allegiance to a lost cause is a means of exploiting the "conveniency" of patriotic sentiment as it confronts the terrible singularity of human life. The cultivation of contrariety in making private illusions as dramatically valid as public verities creates a troublesome stalemate which both expresses and questions the wonder induced by Perkin's prodigious effort.

Perkin Warbeck questions its own premises by making its titular "hero" a pretender and his failure its most compelling artistic success. We are asked in the Epilogue to "excuse" Ford's "bastard brood" (1.9, 7) and yet accept their total defeat by a providentially ordained ruler, who makes "fit use" (V.iii.217) of his triumph by purging the state of its "corrupted blood." Conversely, the body politic has "weak foundations" (1.5) because it is susceptible even to such as Perkin; yet it too earns its right to survival. If the play's ending seems conventional, a "conveniency" inherent in the dramatic compromise between history and tragedy, its characterization and its intermittent experiments with genre and imagery are not. Perkin Warbeck proves, among other things, that restrained eloquence partially compensates for fraud, that true love

can result from uniting the base born and the well bred, that the external threat of a charlatan is not always as unsettling as treason within the palace gates, that those loyal to the state often wear the badge of Judas. Language can for a time disguise a fabricated identity, seemingly oraculous powers can conceal the mortal talent for expediency and prudence in an appointed sovereign. Finally, comic characters possess the true innocence that often functions as the inverted mirror of more serious and sophisticated judgments on a world they only vaguely comprehend. There is indeed a "strange truth" to Perkin Warbeck and if we would seek some gloss to its mystery, some clue to its paradoxical equations, the words of Shakespeare's Henry VI deserve attention, not because they make our perception of Ford's play any more comforting, but because they express so forcefully the convoluted, opaque texture of Ford's marriage of history and tragedy:

This battle fares like to the morning's war,
 When dying clouds contend with growing light,
 What time the shepherd, blowing of his nails,
 Can neither call it perfect day or night.
 Now sways it this way, like a mighty sea
 Forc'd by the tide to combat with the wind;
 Now sways it that way, like the self-same sea
 Forc'd to retire by fury of the wind.
 Sometime the flood prevails, and then the wind;
 Now one the better, then another best;
 Both tugging to be victors, breast to breast;
 Yet neither conqueror nor conquered. ²⁸
 So is the equal poise of this fell war.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

¹ All citations from the text are taken from John Ford, Perkin Warbeck, ed. by Peter Ure (London, 1968). I feel a special indebtedness to this Revels edition, as it has provided the clearest and most comprehensive analysis of a much neglected play. Also useful is the new Penguin edition of Keith Sturgess (London, 1970).

² Havelock Ellis, in his introduction to the Mermaid edition of the play (London, n.d., pp. xii-xiii), states that ". . . in Perkin Warbeck (Ford) laid aside his characteristic defects, and also his characteristic merits, to achieve a distinct dramatic success. It is the least interesting of his plays for those who care for the peculiar qualities which mark Ford's genius, but it certainly ranks among our best historical dramas . . . For the most part, this play is an exception to every generalization that may be arrived at concerning his work . . ." See also Una Ellis-Fermor, The Jacobean Drama (London, 1947), p. 233, and Ure, p. lii.

³ Thomas Gainsford's The True and Wonderful History of Perkin Warbeck (1618) and Francis Bacon's History of the Reign of Henry VII (1622). Both Ure (pp. xxxvi-xxxvii) and Sturgess (p. 396) agree that Ford placed equal reliance on these sources, that he used them selectively to document individual incidents, and that he sometimes altered or added to historical "fact." See J. Le Gay Brereton, "The Sources of Ford's Perkin Warbeck," Anglia, of Bacon's History of Henry VII," Studies of Philology, LIV (1957), 1-13. William Gifford's review of Henry Weber's 1811 edition of Ford's plays shows that history's verdict was not always tolerant: the play is ". . . a chronicle and nothing more; a chronicle, too, in its most exceptionable shape; for while we hesitate to allow it the merit of truth, it comes recommended by none of the graces of fiction. . ." (Quarterly Review, December 1811, p. 473). Quoted in Ure, pp. xlv-xlvi.

⁴ Algernon Charles Swinburne, Essays and Studies (London, 1875), pp. 293-295.

⁵ T. S. Eliot, Essays on Elizabethan Drama (New York, 1960), p. 134.

⁶ Ure (p. xiii) and Irving Ribner, The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare (London, 1965), p. 298.

⁷ Arthur C. Kirsch, Jacobean Dramatic Perspectives (Charlottesville, 1972), p. 113. Ironically, Kirsch's interest in Perkin Warbeck is minimal and restricted in length and focus: ". . . Much of the interest

of the play, even in the strictly historical portions, centers upon the definition of Warbeck's and Lady Katharine's heroism purely in terms of their essentially private love. Warbeck himself, moreover, is a subtle refinement upon the typically Protean Fletcherian character. . ." (p. 115).

⁸ Ure, p. lxxxii-lxxxiii.

⁹ Johnson on Shakespeare, ed. by Arthur Sherbo (New Haven, 1968), Vol. II, p. 704.

¹⁰ For a revealing discussion of this episode, see Peter Ure's remarks in his New Arden edition of Richard II, from which I have cited relevant passages (London, 1961), pp. li-lvii. Several commentators have noticed affinities between Richard II and Perkin Warbeck: see Ure, Perkin Warbeck, pp. lxvi-lxvii and Donald K. Anderson, Jr., "Richard II and Perkin Warbeck," Shakespeare Quarterly, XIII (1962), 260-265.

¹¹ Hyder Rollins and Herschel Baker, The Renaissance in England (Boston, 1968), p. 607.

¹² Ibid., p. 621. See also Lily B. Campbell, Shakespeare's Histories: Mirrors of Elizabethan "Policy" (San Marino, 1947), pp. 85-103.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ For a brief and cogent discussion of definable elements which constitute the history play, see Ribner, p. 24.

¹⁵ A. C. Hamilton, Early Shakespeare (San Marino, 1967), p. 10.

¹⁶ Harold E. Toliver, "Shakespeare's Kingship: Institution and Dramatic Form," Essays in Shakespearean Criticism, ed. by Harold E. Toliver and James Calderwood (Englewood Cliffs, 1970), pp. 58-59. I am greatly indebted to this essay and have developed many of its implications to suit my own discussion of Ford's play.

¹⁷ Kantorowicz's discussion of Richard II is found in Four Centuries of Shakespearean Criticism, ed. by Frank Kermode (New York, 1966), pp. 319-330.

¹⁸ See Leonard F. Dean, "Richard II: The State and Image of the Theater," PMLA, LXVII (1952), 211-218. Walter Pater in his Appreciations (London, 1944) uses the phrase "inverted rite" (p. 205).

¹⁹ See Peter Ure, "The Looking-Glass of Richard II," Philological Quarterly, XXXIV (1955), 219-224.

²⁰ See Brereton, p. 111: ". . . Himself, with long and continual counterfeiting, and with oft telling a lie, was turned by habit almost into the thing he seemed to be; and from a liar to a believer." Ure (p. xlii) observes that "Warbeck never does anything in the play to suggest either that he is playing a part and knows it or - and this is the vital point - that he is . . . playing a part and no longer knows it."

²¹ For this observation, I am indebted to Ure, "Perkin Warbeck," pp. 113-114.

²² Sturges (p. 396) is unusually concise about the facts of Henry's lineage: "Henry's own claims to the throne were not particularly strong. He was the grandson of Catharine of Valois (mother of Henry VI) and a Welsh clerk of the wardrobe, Owen Tudor, whose son Edmund (Henry's father) had married Margaret Beaufort. But the Beaufort line, though it led back ultimately to Edward III, had its own stage of dubiety in John of Gaunt's union with a mistress, subsequently legitimized. And so Henry was vulnerable to attempts to produce real or counterfeit Yorkist pretenders to the throne . . ." See also Ribner (pp. 104, 306), E. M. W. Tillyard, Shakespeare's History Plays (New York, 1947), pp. 29-32, and M. M. Reese, The Cease of Majesty (London, 1961), pp. 1-88.

²³ Some critics believe the play exhibits implicit, exclusive preference for Warbeck or Henry:

"Ford is not really concerned at all with the fortunes of England, with its traditions, its politics, and its countryside; of these he treats solely because of their effect on the somewhat fantastic character, as he has conceived it, that chance has called on to play a leading part for a short while in the historical scene." M. Joan Sargeant, John Ford (London, 1935), p. 69.

"John Ford is not generally considered a political dramatist, but he would seem to be one in Perkin Warbeck. Illustrating the pragmatic viewpoint of such theorists as Machiavelli and Bacon, Ford portrays his ideal king in the person of the wise and eminently practical Henry VII. And so considerable is the playwright's attention to competent and incompetent governing that Perkin Warbeck might well be called a lesson in kingship." Donald K. Anderson, Jr., "Kingship in Ford's Perkin Warbeck," ELH, XXVII (1960), 177.

Ure ("Perkin Warbeck," pp. xlii-xliii), however, believes that "there is, in the heart of the artefact, something which is not wholly susceptible to (the source's) modes of qualification or explanation, something therefore free and anarchic: The Warbeck whose convictions about his own nature appear both sane and noble and appeal as such directly out of the play to its spectators. That is the stroke of genius . . . One in which the spectators must measure the impact and appeal of

Warbeck against the assured testimony of Henry and a whole range of witnesses including the source historians themselves. It should be stressed that this is for the spectators primarily a dramatic and literary experience, not one in which they are asked to judge like a jury in a court of law . . ." This observation is the most satisfying to me, and most closely corresponds to my own view of the play.

²⁴ Even as late as IV.iv., Warbeck's discomfiting effect on Henry's sense of security is evident:

Our charge
Flows through all Europe, proving us steward
Of every contribution which provides
Against the creeping canker of disturbance.
Is it not rare, then, in this toil of state,
Wherein we are embarked, with breach of sleep,
Cares and the noise of trouble, that our mercy
Returns nor thanks nor comfort?

(IV.iv.51-58)

²⁵ Historical versions of Warbeck's "confession" vary somewhat, but agree that it was coerced and made public. See Ure, "Perkin Warbeck," pp. lxxxviii, 131, 175-176.

²⁶ Ure ("Perkin Warbeck," pp. xliii-xliv, 60) questions Ford's accuracy in using source material and criticizes the dramatic effectiveness of these characters: "It is of course right in the design of the whole that Warbeck's followers should be an insufferable and thoughtless lot, but Ford tries to achieve this effect by lazy and thoughtless methods. The result is that what repels us from Astley and his companions is not anything in themselves (they are hardly well enough realized for any positive effects at all), but something in the mind and assumptions of their creator. We can dimly see, however, the place that these ineffectual and unamusing sketches are intended to occupy in the larger design. They are unedifying; and they are a bad prognosis for Warbeck's future and Scotland's . . ." (p. lxiv).

²⁷ Ure, "Perkin Warbeck," p. 15.

²⁸ Henry VI, II.v.1-13. Cited from the New Arden edition, edited by Andrew Cairncross (London, 1964).

CHAPTER V

THE BROKEN HEART

"I know not love," quoth he, "nor will not know it,
Unless it be a boar, and then I chase it;
'Tis much to borrow, and I will not owe it;
My love to love is love but to disgrace it;
For I have heard it is a life in death,
That laughs and weeps, and all but with a breath.

Shakespeare, Venus and Adonis

. . . That is to say, as well as Eros there was an instinct of death. The phenomena of life could be explained from the concurrent or mutually opposing action of these two instincts. It was not easy, however, to demonstrate the activities of this supposed death instinct. The manifestations of Eros were conspicuous and noisy enough . . . It might be assumed that the death instinct operated silently within the organism towards its dissolution, but that, of course, was no proof. A more fruitful idea was that a portion of the instinct is diverted towards the external world and comes to light as an instinct of aggressiveness and destructiveness. In this way the instinct itself could be pressed into the service of Eros, in that the organism was destroying some other thing, whether animate or inanimate, instead of destroying its own self. Conversely, any restriction of this aggressiveness directed outwards would be bound to increase the self-destruction, which is in any case proceeding. At the same time one can suspect from this example that the two kinds of instinct seldom - perhaps never - appear in isolation from each other, but are alloyed with each other in varying and very different proportions and so become unrecognizable to our judgment.

Freud, Civilization and its Discontents

. . . He said that possession was a great moment in life. All strong emotions concentrated there. Perhaps it was so. There was something divine in it; then she would submit, religiously, to the sacrifice. He should have her. And at the thought her whole body clenched itself involuntarily, hard, as if against something; but Life forced her through this gate of suffering, too, and she would submit. At any rate, it would give him what he wanted, which was her deepest wish. She brooded and brooded and brooded herself towards accepting him.

Lawrence, Sons and Lovers

The Broken Heart¹ is a play built upon "th'extremes of all extremes" (IV.iii.150). An extensive, often disquieting examination of passion founded on unattainable ends, Ford's paradoxical equation of love and death is certainly a familiar theme of Renaissance drama in general² and accurately reflects a pervasive concern of his own plays in particular, but the skill with which he makes dramaturgic means serve thematic ends suggests that The Broken Heart is the most faithful and convincing articulation of Ford's passionate and persistent concern with the dialectical function of tragedy to exploit antitheses,³ to make plurality and contradiction the true "unity" of the play. Nowhere in the Ford canon does one find such an exhaustive inquiry into the disturbing implications inherent when "diseases desperate must find cures alike" (III.iii.168): honor affirms both the virtuous impulses between men and women, and the extreme, often destructive consequences of self-esteem and courage; loyalty to one's own feelings and aspirations inevitably conflicts with service to the state and society; suffering in silence reveals both the need to achieve invulnerability to vitiating emotion but invariably results in the explosion of repressed violence onto the self and its innocent and culpable victims; continence represents the most exquisite virtue and nobility, but extremes of self-control easily become transformed into the absolute self-abnegation and self-sacrifice of suicide; finally, compassion and deepest affection cannot avoid the deadly, unnatural intimacy with compulsive dotage, jealousy and possessiveness, as cruelty cannot avoid destroying what kindness can only cherish: "For affections injur'd /

By tyranny, or rigour of compulsion, / Like tempest-threaten'd trees unfirmly rooted, / Ne'er spring to timely growth" (IV.ii.205-207).⁴ These paradoxical,⁵ centrally related truths⁶ are refined and elaborated through characteristic structural elements: the conflicting, often incompatible relationship between character and motivation, the inversion of comic effects to elicit pathos and suffering, the equivocations and circumlocutions of language and gesture.

Tragedy, as Susanne Langer has observed, is a "cadential form. Its crisis is always the turn toward an absolute close . . ." ⁷ This movement toward "self-consummation"⁸ is inevitable in a play so concerned with the equivocal, disturbing effects of love and death, but Ford's uneasy mediation between purposeful sacrifice and needless waste forces the reader-spectator to ask pointedly whether such dramatic "expression" reveals the artist's "erected wit" or his "infected will":⁹ "Sorrows mingled with contents prepare / Rest for care; / Love only reigns in death, though art / Can find no comfort for a broken heart" (V.iii.91-94). Appreciation of the complexities of Ford's art requires, as always, a special act of attention: the complementary effect of sweetened sadness, the antinomies of triumph and despair, are central to a play where "love only reigns in death." We cannot expect to feel comfortable with a dramatic "symmetry" which exploits rather than excludes psychological disorientation and subversive rhetorical and visual effects. Purity and unity of response is, as discussion of Ford's other plays has revealed, patently impossible. The "dissociation of sensibility" of The Broken Heart reflects often an uneasy balance between what is sublime and what is excruciating: what the stage players and their audience see and feel may well be no more than a

troublesome compromise to conventional expectations, the "sense of an ending," precisely because the plural and antithetical ideational and aesthetic vision of the play will admit no simpler or more satisfying response.

It is the paradox of art to exalt and eternize experience above the demands of mortality, to give the illusion of perfection to what is after all artificial and created by human, subjective effort; it is finished yet approximate, the individual expression of its creator and yet ultimately liberated from its author's protective intentions to the status of an object. As Ruskin observes, "we always see something but we never see all";¹⁰ the play initially welcomes and then frustrates our efforts to collaborate with Ford's intentions and our sense of the play's varying impulses towards communion and annihilation is both exhilarating in its intensity and exhausting in the agonies to which we are initiated. This sense of congenital instability consistently informs the tone and texture of The Broken Heart;¹¹ the play's "lesson" is contained in the ambivalent effects of the suffering and torment it anatomizes so thoroughly. The sense of urgency Ford communicates as he articulates the "desperate courage" and "honorable infamy" of his protagonists (V.ii.122) is continually offset by their own pervasive awareness of fatality as they proceed inexorably towards death: "The counsels of the gods are never known / Till men can call th'effects of them their own" (V.iii.105-106). The Broken Heart is Ford's most intricate and penetrating experiment in tragic form, and it is the purpose of this essay to discover why this is so.¹²

In no other play of Ford's is there such a noticeable sense of the dual perils of fragility and hardness, stillness and cacophony, stasis

and violent movement, of the brevity of happiness and the prevailing threat of incipient disaster. Before the play has actually begun, Orgilus' "betrothal"¹³ to Penthea is denied by her brother Ithocles, who marries her instead to Bassanes: as a result, there is an explicit, potentially violent rupture of human affections as Bassanes becomes obsessively jealous of his new wife's previous attachment; Penthea is paralyzed between loyalty to a man she does not love and devotion to a man she cannot marry; Orgilus' "griefs are violent" (I.i.71), "the information / Of an unsettled mind" (I.iii.27-28), as he finds himself caught alternately between the desires to repress and revenge his misfortune, in turn checkmated by Bassanes' enmity and Penthea's refusal to renew the hope of "a real, visible, material happiness" (IV.i.50). Ithocles, conveniently and cruelly ignoring his sister's unhappy fate,¹⁴ pursues his own vision of beauty in Calantha, and the consequences of this relationship will be equally disastrous, ending in Ithocles' brutal murder by Orgilus, Penthea's self-extinction through madness and starvation, Orgilus' self-mutilation by bloodletting, and Calantha's "broken heart." The warnings of Crotolon and Tecnicus (Orgilus' father and teacher, respectively), the contrasting peaceful nuptials of Prophilus and Euphranea (Orgilus' sister), and the agonized repentance of Bassanes and Ithocles cannot overcome "the silent griefs which cut the heart-strings" (V.iii.75). All this, despite a play in which moral message and moral behavior seem initially to be explicit and well-articulated:

Ithocles. Ambition! 'tis of vipers' breed: it gnaws
 A passage through the womb that gave it motion.
 Ambition, like a seeled dove, mounts upward,
 Higher and higher still, to perch on clouds,
 But tumbles headlong down with heavier ruin.
 So squibs and crackers fly into the air,

Then, only breaking with a noise, they vanish
 In stench and smoke. Morality, applied
 To timely practice, keeps the soul in tune,
 At whose sweet music all our actions dance.
 But this is form of books, and school-tradition;
 It physics not the sickness of a mind
 Broken with griefs: strong fevers are not eased
 With counsel, but with best receipts, and means.

(II.ii.1-15)

This speech deserves attention for the way in which it shows the most commendable impulses to self-knowledge and virtuous action easily and inevitably transformed into the most violent compulsions, the most egregious faults. Ithocles unwittingly images his own future destruction in his self-characterization as a "viper," but the motive for his "ambition" is decidedly ambiguous: his thoughts abstract his intentions enough to make the impulses he castigates ill-defined. Conceivably Ithocles' attention is focused either on his military and political renown (as celebrated in I.ii.), his ruthless marriage of convenience for his sister to enhance his own stature and status, or his burgeoning desire for Calantha. What he says thus seems conventional, apostrophic wisdom, ironically applied. What the "viper" eventually destroys is far more than what Ithocles presently envisions: it breeds "a kind of monster love" (I.i.61) which in turn exacerbates Orgilus' vengefulness, Penthea's melancholy, and Bassanes' jealousy; it mirrors Ithocles' hypocrisy in pursuing for himself the same purity of affection he denies in his sister by breaking the oath which rightfully binds her to Orgilus and replacing it with "a most barbarous thralldom" (I.i.54).

As Ithocles' actions proceeded from his pride, "the memory of former discontents / To glory in revenge" (I.i.39-42), so does its replication in his victim, when the roles of hunter and quarry become reversed

as "revenge proves its own executioner" (IV.i.152). Ithocles' attempt to repress passion and appetite only increases his need to gratify them further: ambition "gnaws" its progenitor, consuming as it satisfies, the catalyst in reverse motion of its own destruction. If the trait seems de-personalized and abstract, it is also bestially personified in the brutality which "gnawing" connotes, the clandestine motions of an insidious cancer, self-disclosed to Ithocles as it dissimulates its real and terrible consequences from him. Ambition, like passion, is "blind" as a "seeled dove," propelled by prodigious energy to the height from which its annihilation is assured. Its repression, which Ithocles presumably seeks, only causes a contraction of feeling which ultimately explodes violently "in stench and smoke." In attempting to mask and restrain his passion, Ithocles only consumes himself by it and his attempt to confront the danger he thinks he sees is actually an escape away from and above protective emotions toward "heavier ruin."

Rhetoric as a form of self-deception is of course not new to Fordian protagonists: certainly Bianca, Giovanni and Warbeck illustrate this convincingly. But the complexity and sophistication of Ithocles' speech is original and provocative. It is obvious that the paradoxical function of imagery and diction provides uncertain direction and precarious balance to his invective against "ambition," but his belief that "morality . . . / Keeps the soul in tune" and "physics not the sickness of a mind" is an even more suggestive and enigmatic illustration of his inability to distinguish between imagined and real volition, to control the "strong fevers" of his passion. The sickness of soul produced by ambition can, in Ithocles' eyes, only be cured by the resolute action,

the energetic "best receipts" paradoxically and most satisfactorily achieved through the exercise of the selfsame "ambition." The ambivalence is reciprocal and complete: it is typical of Ithocles that when he is confronted by the unsavory results of his machinations in Crotolón's accusation ("Had this sincerity been real once, / My Orgilus had not been now unwived, / Nor your lost sister buried in a bride-bed" - II.ii.36-38), his contrition shows both "experience in the extremities in others" (II.ii.52) and an unwillingness or inability to redress the wrong he acknowledges. As is observed later in the play, "Ambition hatched in clouds of mere opinion / Proves but in birth a prodigy" (IV.1.72-73).

Another instance of the way in which Ford uses conventional moral sententiae to influence the idiosyncratic directions the play takes is found in a speech which Tecnicus makes to Orgilus:

Honour consists not in a bare opinion
 By doing any act that feeds content,
 Brave in appearance, 'cause we think it brave;
 Such honour comes by accident, not nature,
 Proceeding from the vices of our passion,
 Which makes our reason drunk. But real honour
 Is the reward of virtue, and acquired
 By justice, or by valour which for basis
 Hath justice to uphold it. He then fails
 In honour, who for lucre or revenge
 Commits thefts, murders, treasons, and adulteries
 With such like, by intrinching on just laws,
 Whose sovereignty is best preserved by justice.
 Thus, as you see how honour must be grounded
 On knowledge, not opinion; for opinion
 Relies on probability and accident,
 But knowledge on necessity and truth . . .

(III.1.32-48)

The "counsel" which Ithocles regarded as so ineffectual, so disproportionate to its dilemma, is precisely what is conveyed in Tecnicus' disquisition, the perfect rejoinder to the "opinion" which motivates Ithocles.

It is one thing, however, to know, another thing to act. Tecnicus represents not the hypocrisy of presumed "self-revelation," but rather the choric warning of one who sees the dangers in the equivocal passions of men such as Ithocles and Orgilus but cannot prevent the consequences such passions induce. Tecnicus expresses the conventional voice of moderation, the human agent of a divine oracle that can predict the future but is powerless to stop the movement of men toward their own destruction. Tecnicus, after all, "believes" Orgilus' feigned protestations of the "justice of mine honour" (III.i.30) and though this Spartan sage can dispense wisdom to his pupil, he cannot (like the Friar in 'Tis Pity) guarantee allegiance to proper conduct: since he cannot actively overcome evil, he simply leaves the corruptive environment (IV.i.127-130).

What Tecnicus says provides the play with its most compelling and explicit exemplum, but his departure insures the dissolution of "necessity and truth." He is a witness to what other characters can never attain, and to the universal disaster to which the play ultimately turns. Tecnicus sees virtue as an objective, pragmatic possibility for which all men may strive, but the behavior of Orgilus and Ithocles illustrates that the only "honour" perceived in The Broken Heart is that which satisfies expediency, the casual, gratuitous assaults of "bare opinion . . . / Proceeding from the vices of our passion." The sense of justice in this play is personal and plural. Tecnicus can see what justice is but not enforce it; he is passive in the crossfire of conflicting motivations and aspirations. Only the King could compel adherence to the "honour" which Tecnicus seeks, but Amyclas is old, infirm, and moves helplessly toward death. The "knowledge" which Tecnicus regards as essential for

living is impossible to attain; Orgilus' dying words (V.ii.151-152) illustrate the total disparity of feeling the play creates between life-affirming and life-denying acts: "A mist hangs o'er mine eyes; the sun's bright splendour / Is clouded in an everlasting shadow."¹⁵ Seen in this way, the play ends as it has begun: the protagonists die as they are born, die as a surrogate for a love they can never consummate. The terrible irony of Tecnicus' plea for knowledge rests in the hopelessness and despair which Orgilus has felt from the very beginning of the play, emotions which suggest a retreat from knowledge toward oblivion "to lose the memory of something / Her presence makes to live in me afresh": "From this time sprouted up that poisonous stalk / Of aconite, whose ripened fruit hath ravished / All health, all comfort of a happy life" (I.i.81-82, 36-38). No one in the play can avoid or escape the disturbing implications of "patience," "privacy," and "silence" (V.i.48-50): they are indeed mysteries; as with Lear and Cordelia, to love and be silent, to be the pattern of all patience and say nothing, can have disastrous consequences.

The moral obliquity of The Broken Heart reflects affinities to, and departures from, previous plays, particularly in what we have come to observe as distinctive effects of characterization, genre, and language. As with Perkin Warbeck, promiscuity is a vice absent from the stage, but suffering and death result in The Broken Heart from the renunciation and repression of feeling and desire, not from their indulgence or fruitful consummation. Unlike the treatment of romantic love in the history play, human relationships do not represent (with the possible exception of the ancillary plot involving Prophilus and Euphranea) a protective escape

from the vicissitudes of politics; Calantha becomes the "lawful sovereign" (V.iii.3) in the end, but her coronation quickly becomes transformed into a funeral. Like Annabella in 'Tis Pity, Penthea is caught between the conflicting desires of two men, a former lover and present husband; unlike Penthea in The Broken Heart, Annabella is forced to become Giovanni's sacrificial testimonial to the "purity" of incest, rather than choose suicide as a release from intolerable demands. In 'Tis Pity, a lover (who is also a brother) kills his mistress; in The Broken Heart, a lover kills his mistress' brother. A comparison with Love's Sacrifice is even more revealing: Penthea, like Bianca, is technically innocent of adultery, the "victim" of a jealous husband's imagination (Bassanes in III.iii., II.i.). Unlike Bianca, however, she never even thinks of betraying her husband, and her assertiveness (in contrast to Bianca) is most clearly revealed when she declares her innocence and her husband acknowledges almost immediately his shameful conduct to her. Whatever "adultery" she believes she has committed arises from the inverse, paradoxical logic of a tormented, unhappily married woman: "For she that's wife to Orgilus and lives / In known adultery with Bassanes / Is at the best a whore" (III.iii.41-43). The tragedy of The Broken Heart results from obedience to, not the extra-marital, fundamentally immoral defiance of, the status quo: it is Ithocles and Bassanes who violate the custom of betrothal between Orgilus and Penthea, and the agon of this unfortunate couple is as much a consequence of their submission to what is an intolerable, unjust separation than any act of violence they commit as an escape from such questionable strictures. Repentance by Ithocles and Bassanes cannot impede Orgilus' fury, cannot prevent Penthea's suicide, Ithocles' murder, or Calantha's death by grief.

Once again, the narrative and dramatic structure of this play is indebted to, and achieves its independence from, what Ford accomplished in previous plays: 1) Moral permissiveness and clandestine trysts are not the problem in The Broken Heart, but rather the violent repercussions which occur when the protagonists attempt to master and restrain passion by believing that they can remain invulnerable to it; neither the hypocrisy of Ithocles nor his later contrition can stem the motion of Orgilus and Penthea towards homicide and self-slaughter. 2) Revenge is still an extra-legal form of punishment which destroys guilty and innocent alike, as in 'Tis Pity, and Orgilus must, like Giovanni, destroy what he cannot possess, but he is different in an important aspect: he cannot induce his mistress to reciprocate his romantic feelings. 3) There are still recurring instances of abrupt changes in appearance or behavior, and "fragmentation" in characterization still seems a working principle for the dramatist (Bassanes' sudden contrition, Calantha's "indifference" to death as she dances, Orgilus' "respect" for Ithocles as he kills him). There is, however, a contrasting principle at work as well: Ford's use of "allegorical" names (Orgilus = "angry," Calantha = "flower of beauty," Penthea = "complaint") and his attempt to achieve a certain consistency and plausibility in behavior by setting up a priori conditions to which the characters are obliged to conform (Penthea's marriage) result in a more skillful blend of stylized¹⁶ and naturalistic modes of presentation. It is in the tension between codified behavior (revenge, marriage, kingship) and idiosyncratic attempts to circumvent the rules (Ithocles' arranged marriage of Penthea to Bassanes, Orgilus' attempt to win her back, Penthea's curious "plea" to Calantha to accept Ithocles' suit) that Ford

achieves his most complex method of characterization. 4) There is less attention to what we have previously seen as "comic" material than in any other play of Ford's and whatever elements remain are less closely integrated into the fabric of The Broken Heart, their very effect as "comic" being questionable and ambivalent. 5) For the first and perhaps the only time in Ford's plays, language, particularly image patterns, is elaborate in iteration and symphonic in structure, serving as a true verbal leitmotif and supplemented by several striking visual effects of stage ritual and ceremony.

There is perhaps something calculated and mannered in Ford's attempts to achieve "pity with delight" (Prologue, l.18), but the attempt to maintain such dissimilar effects does not necessarily imply a reconciliation. The "marriage" which concludes the play is a curious affair, suggesting physical dismemberment and emotional breakdown: "The Lifeless Trunk shall wed the Broken Heart" (V.iii.100). This spiritlike union of corpses is a grotesque, disturbing echo to what purports to be the "heroic" sacrifices of the protagonists, and one's impulse is to reevaluate rather than reaffirm the catharsis of a "smile in death" (V.iii.98) as "faithful lovers" (V.iii.104) acknowledge funereal loyalties. As with Ford's other tragedies, the central paradox involves an enforced marriage with its equivocal mixture of pathos and violence. Bianca and Fernando bed in thought if not in deed, yet the consequences to their act are bloody enough as Caraffa avenges what he presumes to be the humiliation of cuckoldry; Giovanni and Annabella commit incest and adultery in fact, furthered by Giovanni's own specious rhetoric and Annabella's unhappy, unwished-for marriage to Soranzo; Perkin and Katharine marry as a political

desideratum at first but their love paradoxically matures into the single most moral and emotionally satisfying experience of the play. All of the most deadly and sorrowful consequences of The Broken Heart ensue not only from a forced marriage but the violation of social custom, political arrangement, and personal feeling when, as the play begins, Penthea¹⁷ and Orgilus must renounce their vows and part. That their emotional "victory" is achieved through the ambivalent "justice" of personal revenge and results in the destruction of innocent and guilty alike in a final, multiple catastrophe is typical of the way Ford manages seemingly irreconcilable impulses and effects.

The play's epilogue is a formulaic, conventional appeal to what has previously been observed as Ford's concern with the audience's implicit process of judging what it has seen; as a dramatic device it offers no surprises but its singular application to the play is not as exclusive and uniform as it seems to be. We might well ask how the irremediably painful conclusion ("Art / Can find no comfort for a broken heart") can in turn be "resolved" by the belief that "where noble judgments and clear eyes are fix'd / To grace endeavour, there sits truth not mix'd / With ignorance" - Epilogue, 11.1-3). The Broken Heart, however, is not so much a "morality" play as a "mortality" play and its story does not encourage "noble judgments" when protagonists believe that "mortality / Creeps on the dung of earth, and cannot reach / The riddles which are purpos'd by the gods" (I.iii.179-181). Nearchus, after all, says in the play's final lines that "the counsels of the gods are never known / Till men can call th'effects of them their own" (V.iii.104-105) and Orgilus' "vision" of mist and shadow (V.ii.151-152) makes the question of "clear eyes" in

either characters or audience arguable and complicated. As the play progressively unfolds, we are obliged to witness 1) the betrothal of Orgilus and Penthea violated and superseded "by all the laws of ceremonious wedlock" (II.iii.54) and Penthea's firm refusal to dissolve her marriage to Bassanes no matter how unjust or unhappy, and yet her willingness to further Ithocles' suit for Calantha's affections, altruism in "th'extremes of all extremes." 2) Orgilus respecting Penthea's wishes but nevertheless disguising his violent enmity for Ithocles until the propitious moment when he imprisons his victim in a chair, treacherously killing him, paradoxically excoriating and mourning Ithocles (IV.iv.30-39, 61-62, 71). His justification for killing Ithocles as he prepares to pay for his crime is equally difficult to accept: ". . . no brave, yet no unworthy enemy. / Nor did I use an engine to entrap / His life, out of a slavish fear to combat / Youth, strength, or cunning; but for that I durst not / Engage the goodness of a cause on fortune, / By which his name might have outfaced my vengeance" (V.ii.139-144). 3) Bassanes as comically deluded cuckold who speaks in vile epithets, and pathetically repentant husband who tortures himself for doubting his wife's fidelity. 4) Ithocles as courtly lover and military hero, who pursues his own desire as he thwarts his sister's happiness. 5) Calantha's impassiveness in the wake of the multiple deaths, including that of Ithocles, which conclude the play: "Those that are dead / Are dead; had they not now died, of necessity / They must have paid the debt they ow'd to nature / One time or other . . ." (V.ii.88-91). Episodes such as these require careful examination; if we wish to understand more clearly why the impasse exists between what the epilogue says and what the play reveals, we should begin with some consideration of characteri-

zation. I have deliberately chosen Orgilus for extended discussion and particular attention, with subordinate analysis of the other major protagonists. He may well be the most protean and consistently intriguing figure in the play and for that reason can serve as a paradigm by which to measure the other characters.

"This pastime / Appears majestic; some high tun'd poem / Hereafter shall deliver to posterity / The writer's glory and his subject's triumph" (V.ii.130-133): So does Bassanes pronounce eulogy when Orgilus dies "in opening of a vein too fully, too lively" (V.ii.121). It is a consummate piece of theatricalized destruction, a complement to Penthea's fatal malnutrition (IV.ii), awesome ("desperate courage") and shocking ("honourable infamy") as it ennobles and yet indulges the desire for "fierce and eager bloodshed" (V.ii.113). The equivocal nature of Orgilus' passion, however, qualifies what is presumably his "triumph": while he can and does attempt to restrain and suppress his impulses to love and hate, he ultimately cannot control his urge to avenge Ithocles' cruelty to Penthea, cannot conceal his knowledge that no matter how energetically or resolutely he tries to forget his misfortune, "griefs are violent" (I.1.71). As he tries to escape the terrible consequences of passion, he escapes desire only to embrace it, and it is this ironic sense of urgency courting its own destruction that affects our response to him in the play.

The opening scene of The Broken Heart introduces the curious dialectical temperament of Orgilus, emphasizing his need simultaneously to dissimulate and disclose the source of his discontent. His initial dialogue with his father Crotolon reveals, in casual conversation, the "reason" for sudden departure from Sparta, but it is not until the scene

is three-fourths concluded (I.83) that Croton tentatively accepts the credibility of Orgilus' plea and gives his consent to the journey. Orgilus' wish to escape the source of torment is justifiable only if one tolerates its ambiguity: "voluntary exile" (I.1.77) would presumably ease Penthea's burden in living with a pathologically jealous husband and remove the torment of jealousy from Bassanes himself, as well as eliminate Orgilus' own misery. We can legitimately inquire as to his actual motivation, however, and it is of some importance at this early and crucial episode to determine whether Orgilus' interest is in helping himself or helping others.¹⁸ If his purpose is to help Bassanes eradicate jealousy, there is some doubt as to whether such an effort can ever succeed as an exercise in common sense or idealism, given Bassanes' own "cruelty" and "self-unworthiness" (I.1.33, 68) in the extremity of his fear, and Orgilus' own bitter memory of a callous, expedient betrayal which "hath ravish'd / All health, all comfort of a happy life" (I.1.37-38).

We are thus entitled to ask if Orgilus' rhetoric of reasonableness (as a variant of what we have previously seen as Giovanni's sophistry in intellectualizing strong desire and emotion) resolves or merely irritates an already tense situation. Furthermore, if Orgilus' "griefs are violent" in the same way he perceives Bassanes' marital insecurities, there is a grim irony in wishing "to free Penthea from a hell on earth" (I.1.80) by allowing her to remain the unhappy victim of a loveless marriage and by trying "to lose the memory." As Giovanni uses sophistry to legitimize his pursuit of illicit passion, so Orgilus employs questionable premises to escape the implications of his own feelings; although this first scene clearly conditions sympathy for the victimization of Orgilus, it proves

at the same time and from the beginning of the play that "revenge proves its own executioner" (IV.i.139) as Ithocles' "glory in revenge" (I.i.42) is reciprocated in kind by Orgilus. Orgilus repeats Ithocles' tyranny of "brotherly love" by presuming sovereignty over Euphranea's affections (and requiring an oath) and he leaves Sparta with an ominous prediction for the future: "Souls sunk in sorrows never are without 'em; / They change fresh airs, but bear their griefs about 'em" (I.i.117-118). The Broken Heart thus presents an explicit contradiction between act and intention; what Orgilus proposes is subject to the infirmities of his own motivations and his acknowledgment of the primacy of grief even as he attempts to escape its consequences. If his own misfortune makes his situation hopeless, it does not at the same time prevent a curious replication in his own family as he attempts to insure Euphranea's "honour" and "well-doing" (I.i.88-89) by assuming an authority he regarded as reprehensible in Ithocles. These vagaries of impulse, these fluctuations of intent, may not be willful or premeditated, but ensuing scenes will prove Euphranea's prophecy that "heaven / Does look into the secrets of all hearts" (I.i.113-114) even if men cannot, and that the troublesome complexity of Orgilus' dilemma is exacerbated by the elusive and questionable methods he employs to resolve it.

Orgilus' next appearance (I.iii.), "metamorphos'd" (I.iii.33) in the disguise of a scholar ("Aplotes"), confirms these suspicions: he has not left Sparta after all. It is a less subtle and less successfully achieved¹⁹ form of impersonation than the rhetorical subterfuge he had employed earlier, but it paradoxically enables him to be near Penthea, the source of his intense and disturbed passion. 'Tis Pity

revealed the fundamental discrepancies of Giovanni's reason arguing the demands of desire to the Friar, the argument between a young man's "will" and an older man's presumed "knowledge"; this scene begins with another exposition of the conflict, here between Orgilus and Tecnicus, "a philosopher" (I.iii.s.d.). As Euphranea intimated earlier (I.i), Orgilus' efforts to belie his true feelings are, to Tecnicus, transparent and futile:

Tempt not the stars, young man; thou canst not play
With the severity of fate. This change
Of habit, and disguise in outward view,
Hides not the secrets of thy soul within thee
From their quick-piercing eyes, which dive at all times
Down to thy thoughts. In thy aspect I note
A consequence of danger . . .

(I.iii.1-7)

As with Giovanni and Perkin, to challenge destiny is both heroic in gesture and absurd in accomplishment; it both defines and excludes admiration. Tecnicus, like Crotolon, observes Orgilus' "silent griefs" and foresees their harm to his tormented pupil and "to others" (I.iii.17-18). Orgilus, on the other hand, sees efforts to cure "hidden wounds" (I.iii.10) as efficacious philosophy, a reiteration of the rationalization he provided to his father, a complacent dismissal of a "crooked by-way" (I.iii.12) soon to be traveled. For a second time, Orgilus manages to persuade someone of the sincerity of reason, his "spirit of truth" (I.iii.29), while at the same time acknowledging covertly the omnipotence of concealed emotions:

Love, thou art full of mystery! The deities
Themselves are not secure in searching out
The secrets of those flames, which, hidden, waste

A breast made tributary to the laws
Of beauty. Physic yet hath never found
A remedy to cure a lover's wound.

(I.iii.36-41)

Tecnicus' counsel is thus a suspicious "balm" (I.iii.10). Orgilus both affirms and denies control over passion, and the precariousness of his feelings makes his contrition typically ambiguous: "Nor doth malice / Of present hopes so check them with despair / As that I yield to thought of more affliction / Than what is incident to frailty" (I.iii.21-24). It is precisely the disturbing implications of Orgilus' "frailty" which point so insistently toward disaster.

Thus when Orgilus encounters his sister in a clandestine meeting with Prophilus (friend to Ithocles), the "test" of self-control fails when confronted with Euphranea's "chaste vows" to Prophilus, a presumed ally of the agent of Orgilus' misfortune. Euphranea asks Prophilus to respect her "oath" to Orgilus, but such tacit demonstration of loyalty is not enough to satisfy her brother, who sees her affection to Prophilus as a violation of strict obedience: "There is no faith in woman. / Passion, oh be contained: my very heart-strings / Are on the tenters" (I.iii.90-92).

What passes for the courtesy of virtuously affirmed affection is for Orgilus "language suited / To a divided mind" (I.iii.66-67), a man disposed to play the roles of avenger and moral guide, unrequited lover and brotherly protector. It seems inevitable, then, that such tension at this point should be unresolved both visually and verbally, as Orgilus maintains his scholarly disguise and adds the gibberish of an eccentric schoolman, but his quizzical observations mark him as mad "north north-

west"; abstract disquisitions which he uses to conceal his identity have a way of articulating the urgent impulses underlying his dissimulation:

. . . Is it possible,
 With a smooth tongue, a leering countenance,
 Flattery, or force of reason -
 To turn or to appease the raging sea?
 Answer to that. - Your art? what art to catch
 And hold fast in a net the sun's small atoms?
 No, no; they'll out, they'll out; ye may as easily
 Outrun a cloud driven by a northern blast
 As fiddle-faddle so. . . .
 But will you hear a little! You are tootetchy,
 You keep no rule in argument. Philosophy
 Works not upon possibilities,
 But natural conclusions. - Mew! - absurd!
 The metaphysics are but speculations
 Of the celestial bodies, or such accidents
 As not mixed perfectly, in the air engendered,
 Appear to us unnatural; that's all
 These apish boys, when they but taste the grammates
 And principles of theory, imagine
 They can oppose their teachers. Confidence
 Leads many into errors

(I.iii.102-110, 113-120, 125-128)

Thus proceeds the "divided mind" of Orgilus in fabricated conversation with itself. But the intention and effect is not merely concealment and amusing idiosyncrasy; as his "philosophic" soliloquy ironically reveals, Orgilus has all this time attempted to gloss over painful exigency with "smooth tongue," both to persuade himself that his direction is right and secure, and to convince others of his "sincere" intentions. And the disturbing answers he provides to hypothetical, paradoxical questions (they are repeated in the song which begins III.ii) indicate how tenuous his control really is, and foretell the fatal future in which such control will eventually explode in violence. Orgilus' retreat into insularity and protective repression of feelings assumes an impure

mixture of morality and license, unnatural confinement of desire, a rebellion against "rule of argument," an "error" born of "confidence."

Orgilus' concluding soliloquy (I.iii.175-183) reiterates the initial ironies suggested by his characterization. As with Ithocles, his sister's happiness becomes an implicit denial of his own felicity and a consequent catalyst for impulses toward deception and denial of his true feelings; the delights of "Hymen" fall prey to the "deceits" of "Mercury," god of eloquence and stealth.²⁰ Unlike Giovanni, who sought to deny fate, Orgilus' rhetoric is more subtle and delusive in its assumptions: "Ingenious fate has leapt into mine arms, / Beyond the compass of my brain. Mortality / Creeps on the dung of earth, and cannot reach / The riddles which are purpos'd by the gods" (I.iii.178-181). Orgilus readily acknowledges an omniscient and omnipotent destiny and simply believes that such a power works for him;²¹ what Tecnicus thought to be the variability and incipient menace of fortune seems to Orgilus to be pure beneficence, an expedient act of luck. The rest of the play illustrates how mutable such hopes are, how perilous Orgilus' sense of security really is, a double-edged "deceit."²²

By now Ford's reliance on a dialectical technique of characterization is apparent: Orgilus is presented as both ideologue and intriguer, alternating his defense of feeling with empirical demonstration of his will, his persistent devotion to his passion. His disguise as scholar is an external manifestation of his "intellectual" posturing to justify the "extremities" rightly foreseen by Tecnicus (I.iii.17). When he finally gains access to Penthea in private (II.iii), Orgilus is still in impersonation, and by manipulating the reader-spectator's responses to this

visual fact, Ford creates a fully expressive demonstration of the play's cruel and abrasive dichotomy of duty in conflict with desire.²³ The testimony of Orgilus himself, his disguise temporarily discarded, is revealing: his "affection" for Penthea is really a form of possessiveness, "the all of me myself" (II.iii.71-73), and his kneeling to Penthea as a ritual of fealty cannot entirely conceal his need to assert authority. As a further indication of his ambivalent feeling, it is only necessary to examine what he has in disguise previously said to Penthea:

. . . Time can never
On the white table of unguilty faith
Write counterfeit dishonour. Turn those eyes,
The arrows of pure love, upon that fire
Which once rose to a flame, perfum'd with vows
As sweetly scented as the incense smoking
On Vesta's altars; virgin tears, like
The holiest odours, sprinkled dew to feed 'em
And to increase their fervour.

Penthea.

Orgilus.

Be not frantic.
All pleasures are but mere imagination
Feeding the hungry appetite with steam
And sight of banquet, whilst the body pines,
Not relishing the real taste of food.
Such is the leanness of a heart divided
From intercourse of troth-contracted loves.
No horror should deface that precious figure
Seal'd with the lively stamp of equal souls.

(II.iii.25-41)

Ironically, it is Penthea's "unguilty faith" to Bassanes, her unwillingness to pollute her honour in maintaining a clandestine relationship (II.iii.99-102) with Orgilus which becomes her psychological cul-de-sac. The "fire of pure love" is refining only if she refuses adultery; for Orgilus "pure love" cannot leave his desires unpurged. They do not burn away; he is simply consumed by them. The ambience here is sensual as well as spiritual; love is both sacrifice of "virgin tears" and a means

by which desires "increase their fervour," rather than temporizing and restraining emotion. Penthea's response makes Orgilus' plea for "chastity" more an indulgence of his own wishes rather than respect for hers. What is really articulated here is the agony of deprivation, the temptation of a frustrated "heart divided / From intercourse of troth-contracted loves." The "horror" is immediate and real: no "purity" exists if adultery, even to "true love," remains a viable choice, and appeals to virtue cannot erase the sexual longings of one who cannot choose between indulging "the real taste of food" and exorcising it. Orgilus cannot restore a ravished virginity and if we think Penthea protests too much and loves Orgilus too little, we must remember it is she who must make the sacrifice and disobey the sanctity of marriage. As a result of his failure to persuade Penthea, Orgilus becomes a man of "action, not words" (II.iii.126), but the hopelessness of his quest to win back Penthea makes one wonder what such energy and resolution truly accomplish if "justice of mine honour" can only eliminate and not replace the object of his affections.

For approximately the final half of the play, these several contradictory facts about Orgilus become more and more acute. Suspicion and anxiety over his true intents, the fear of Tecnicus and Crotonon that "some violent design of sudden nature" exists (III.1.6), transform his "giddy rashness" (III.1.2) into a mortal infection of the mind (III.v.45). As Orgilus' evasion becomes more precipitous and pronounced, he becomes more accomplished in defending himself against such inquisitions, more fearless in taking the law unto himself against "that license sovereignty holds without check / Over a meek obedience"

(III.v.6-7). As he loses his caution, however, Orgilus becomes careless, ignoring the prophecy of Tecnicus which foretells his doom ("Tis dotage of a withered brain" - IV.i.152). The ironic discrepancy between the increased intensity of the warnings given to Orgilus and his growing power in exploiting the trust and friendship of Ithocles (who believes Orgilus is honest, "a man of single meaning" - IV.i.14-15), shows how characterization has become a powerful medium for articulating the paradoxical movements of the play. Thus in III.v., we observe the growing dependence between Penthea's brother and her disappointed lover, the anxiety of Crotolon in judging the motives of his son, and the momentary happiness of the marriage plans of Prophilus and Euphranea, this last suggesting a hopefulness which the other characters in the play cannot achieve. A further irony is revealed in the song Orgilus sings as an epithalamium to his sister ("Comforts lasting, loves increasing"), indicating the immense variance between her future and his. By a seeming relaxation of dramatic tension, *Lord* actually increases its emotional impact, and the final two acts of the play illustrate Orgilus' curious and complex behavior as an emblem of the play's concluding movement toward catastrophe.

Orgilus' plural persona - aggressor and victim, sensualist and ascetic, brother and lover, fatalist and individualist - contribute to this singular development. His admiration for Ithocles as a "clear mirror / Of absolute perfection" (IV.i.81-82) is offset by what others see in Ithocles as "vain unruly passions" (IV.i.115): what Orgilus concealed as repressed desire for Penthea is now transferred externally to Ithocles' torment over Calantha and a curious, inverse fraternity of

feeling evolves as Ithocles becomes in public what Orgilus can only be in private - a man of extreme emotion and intense passion. The betrothal of Ithocles and Calantha (IV.iii) is the paradoxical moment when Orgilus' role as "confidant" is made most clear and when his hopes for Penthea are destroyed as she becomes insane. Ithocles has never been so forthright in friendship ("We'll distinguish / Our fortunes merely in the title; partners / In all respects else but the bed" - IV.iii.133-135) and yet the song which concludes the celebration (IV.iii.142-153) suggests ominously that "now Love dies." The real fraternity and communion of death is accurately foreseen by Orgilus: "till lastly / We slip down in the common earth together" (IV.iii.136-137), and when Penthea's dead body is brought in (IV.iv), we remember how he had watched her decline (IV.ii), alternately taunting Bassanes and Ithocles, then expressing the contorted voice of anguish and sorrow. The duality of feeling, this sense of eloquence and invective, never leaves him, and even loses the one he loves most.

The murder of Ithocles (IV.iv) is the moment when Orgilus seems most in control, most assured in the pursuance of his compulsion to violence, but the sight of Penthea's dead body "veiled" symbolizes all he has failed to achieve: his treachery to Ithocles makes his victim that much more noble in enduring execution, even eliciting paradoxical sympathy for the man he has resolved to kill: "Farewell, fair spring of manhood. Henceforth / Welcome best expectation of a noble sufferance" (IV.iv.71-72). It is the supreme irony of Orgilus' crime that Ithocles and Penthea are united as "sweet twins" (IV.iv.74), while he himself assumes the terrible isolation of survival, a "justice" which eventually

is satisfied only by his own punishment and execution.²⁴

Orgilus' disintegration is real, a somewhat grotesque variation of what he had previously prepared for Ithocles. Thus in the last act of the play we see his "friendship" for Bassanes,²⁵ seemingly "unforc'd and naturally free" (V.i.42), though now it will be Bassanes who in turn assists Orgilus in his own execution, a man partially and ironically responsible for the death of Penthea, and Orgilus is painfully aware: "The sickness of my fortune, which since Bassanes / Was husband to Penthea, had lain bedrid" (V.ii.118-119). Orgilus dies as he lives, by bleeding to death; his forthright acknowledgment of Ithocles' murder and praise of his victim (V.ii.46-47) contrasts typically with the questionable rationalization for his method (V.ii.139-143). The end of Orgilus is as enigmatic as anything we have previously seen in The Broken Heart: the gradual diminution and waste of energy in futile, misspent passion and the consuming demands of vengeance counterpoint the skill with which he places his distorted sense of righteousness into a blind alley, a mission without compensation. How typical, then, that he should die in a "mist" (V.ii.152), his heart eternally frozen (V.ii.154-155).

Ithocles is, in several important ways, a recognizable parallel to his antagonist: like Orgilus, he interferes with a sister's happiness as he freely and selfishly indulges his own feelings for Calantha; like Orgilus, he suffers (at least for a time) in silence as he covets from a distance the affection of a woman; like Orgilus, Ithocles is a man who must "glory in revenge, by cunning partly, / Partly by threats" (I.i.42-43). Indeed it is this last-named fact which sets Orgilus single-mindedly to work; revenge does in this play "prove its

own executioner" by a curious replication of motive: Orgilus accuses Ithocles of thwarting a legally sanctioned marriage to Penthea out of revenge and "memory of former discontents" (I.i.41), yet it is Orgilus in turn who becomes possessed by this self-consuming desire to punish Ithocles by personal "justice."

There is also an initial contrast between Orgilus and Ithocles: the former appears as a private man, dressed in the guise of a scholar, while the latter is portrayed as a military hero, a public warrior in triumph, who is both humble and eloquent. Furthermore, and perhaps more to the point, Ithocles will come to possess a quality denied to Orgilus: the impulse toward repentance. Even though Ithocles never follows through on his recognition of guilt and sees such knowledge as "too late" (IV.i.10), it is expressed often enough in the play (II.ii; III.iii; IV.i; IV.ii) to exploit the double image of a man "in every disposition nobly fashioned" (IV.i.202), who yet sees "bloody guilt, that he betray'd their name / To infamy in this reproachful match" (III.iii.46-47). Furthermore, it is through the very act of penance that Ithocles' ambition is revealed: his love for Calantha (III.iii) and what proves to be his only moment of romantic satisfaction in the play can only be seen in the context of the debatable morality of a "pride" (I.i.39) which insures his eventual downfall. Even his imagined "friendship" with Orgilus is to him "ambition" (III.iii.49), and this disaffecting contrast of energy and hypocrisy, contrition and willfulness, informs his presence throughout The Broken Heart. Ithocles ends as he began, acknowledging (as Orgilus in turn will) both ignorance ("On my soul / Lies such an infinite clog of massy dulness, / As that I have not sense enough to

feel it" - IV.ii.174-176) and culpability for his crimes ("The earnest of his wrongs to thy forc'd faith, / . . . together perish / In my last breath" - IV.iv.66, 68-69), both excoriated (IV.iv.30-38) and eulogized (IV.iv.39-51) by his killer. As Penthea predicted (III.iii.34, 79), her brother dies "reconcil'd" by her side. Ambition, the fearsome "prodigy" (IV.i.73) conceived by Orgilus, is yet the most compelling reflection of a man whose most bitter enemy can yet marvel at "bravery / Of an undaunted spirit, conquering terror," which "proclaim'd his last act triumph over ruin" (V.ii.40-42).

The perplexing shadow which Ithocles casts on the play directly depends on the perspective in which he is perceived: Orgilus regards the betrayal of Penthea as treachery, while Ithocles can only apologize for youthful indiscretion (II.i.44-50); the quintessential soldier's triumph (I.ii) seems an ironic contrast to the sad story of a sister betrayed by a prideful brother (I.i); a man who says he believes in "resolution" (I.ii.88) and "means" (II.i.15) seems to have a peculiar inability, an infirmity of will, to do any more than dutifully confess his gross violation of his sister's welfare, but there may be something ultimately callous and superficial in the brutality of his grinding Penthea's heart into dust (III.iii.43-45) and his peremptory dismissal of her complaints when they become too irritating: "Trouble not / The fountains of mine eyes with thine own story" (III.iii.109-110). Ithocles is quick, perhaps too quick, to offer assistance to Crotolon (II.i.54-55) and Penthea (II.i.65-70, III.v), too credulous in his acceptance of Orgilus' intimacy. His protection of Penthea against the ranting accusations of Bassanes seems ironic in view of his own responsibility for her

dilemma. His own freedom to court Calantha is insured by the supremely heroic efforts of a sister who deserves to be more than the "martyr" (III.iii.82) he applauds; his facile compassion provides no real consolation. Thus Ithocles' reputation exceeds his actual behavior, his interest in his own affairs is never sacrificed to the welfare of others, and polite excuse is replaced by irritation when he has to rehearse grief beyond a level he can tolerate. Passivity for him is really a subtle form of manipulation. Only in the "celerity of dying" does he act resolutely and courageously, but by that time there is no way out. Only in contrast to the more intense sufferings, the crueler deprivations of Orgilus, does Ithocles seem a villain, but even Orgilus cannot resist a final compliment.

By now it is clear that there is not one protagonist in this play, but several, alternately alienating and engaging our sympathy, each compensating for what the other lacks, a principle of characterization based on both variation and repetition.²⁶ What we have seen in the men applies as well to the women. There is no reason to deny, for example, that Penthea (who, like Perkin Warbeck, makes her initial appearance in the second act of the play) is "a miserable creature led to ruin / By an unnatural brother" (III.iii.18-19), but she can be seen in other, more conflicting persona as well.²⁷ To Orgilus she is a "shrine of beauty" (I.1.64), but when he attempts to claim his right of possession by asserting his passion, her "purity" of obedience to Bassanes forces her to spurn her lover's suit abruptly and decisively:

Your reputation, if you value any,
Lies bleeding at my feet. Unworthy man,
If ever henceforth thou appear in language,

Message or letter to betray my frailty,
 I'll call thy former protestations lust,
 And curse my stars for forfeit of my judgement.
 Go thou, fit only for disguise and walks
 To hide thy shame. This once I spare thy life.

(II.iii.111-118)

To Ithocles she is a hapless victim of a brother whose "rash spleen / Hath with a violent hand pluck'd . . . / A lover-bless'd heart to grind it into dust" (III.iii.11-13); it thus must seem an act of almost irrational compassion and generosity for her to further his suit to Calantha (as she does with his knowledge)²⁸ under such excruciating conditions. Penthea is innocent of what an insanely jealous husband conceives to be allegations of fornication with Orgilus (II.i) and incest with Ithocles (III.iii.118), but the supremely enervating struggle to maintain her honour at the expense of happiness (II.iii.130-131) produces an even more severe accusation, this time self-directed: "For she that's wife to Orgilus and lives / In known adultery with Bassanes / Is at the best a whore" (III.iii.41-43).²⁹

There is thus a two-fold irony connected with Penthea's presence in the play: she both willfully pursues and passively accepts her journey towards the grave, and her death wish, repeated more than once (II.iii.140-148; III.vi.41-42) is both an exercise of "humility and silent duty" (III.iii.127) and the surfeit of melancholy (III.vi.13), "dwelling too precisely on the event." Penthea's love is truly the surrogate of sorrow and the catalyst of her desperate embrace of death. Giving "all for love" is for her a form of total self-abnegation whose perfect dramaturgic expression is death by starvation, "the forfeit / Of noble shame with mixtures of pollution" (IV.ii.149-150). Penthea's

"leprous soul" (IV.ii.169) is in the inextricable grasp of malingering insanity, an escape into oblivion for a woman who is both a "griev'd beauty" (IV.ii.126) and a "lamentable object" (IV.ii.61), achieving a glorious sacrifice and pathetic annihilation. This inherent duality in dramatic technique of pointing and counterpointing indivisible opposites finds its perfect, final equivalent in a woman who both believes she has slept with her eyes open (IV.ii.74-75) and who dies "veil'd" (IV.iv.10); a perpetual shadow to those who must witness and judge her behavior on and off the stage, Penthea's true allegiance is to "the inward fashion of my mind" (II.i.99).

The predictability and symmetry of such artficed, patterned behavior should not blind the reader to the deeper, more natural and human implications of what the characters say and do and what the reader-spectator sees and judges. The illusion of the stage invariably contracts time, imposes conformity and causality on thought and action, makes one see reality as a detached, refined purgation of excess and improbability; imitation is forever different. And yet the sense of unreconciled difference, the arbitrary fusion of opposites is closer to the mortal feeling of discomfort, the isolation bred of "connecting nothing with nothing." Morality is seldom moral in The Broken Heart. There is nothing comforting about paradox, no matter how resourceful its artistic presentation; we are simply too monistic, too reliant on what we project as untroubled speculation, the pride and satisfaction of knowing who we and others are, even to accept easily the characterization Ford articulates in The Broken Heart; Penthea is too original to be real, too disturbing to be human. In the several scenes in which

she appears, this complexity and diversity is all too apparent. Her first entrance triggers Bassanes' dual impulses of admiration and suspicion for a wife he considers "an unmatch'd blessing or a horrid curse" (II.i.67), the logic of the absolutist and extremist, but his reaction simply parallels the varying emotions she evokes herself. She can be both assertive in her integrity ("I need / No braveries nor cost of art to draw / The whiteness of my name into offence" - II.i.92-94) and listless and passive as that integrity isolates her from her husband: "I am no mistress. / Whither you please, I must attend; all ways / Are alike pleasant to me" (II.i.107-109).

To Orgilus and Ithocles she becomes a woman of infinite variety, a temperament which reflects the most complex emotional situation that the dramatist can express. Her most intimate and painful interview with Orgilus can elicit anger at his presumptuousness ("Thing of talk, be gone, / Be gone without reply" - II.iii.45-46), kneeling to him in devotion, then promptly insisting that their only future lies in mutual forgetfulness "in an everlasting silence" (II.iii.69); she both blames him for her "sorrow" (II.iii.119-120) and resigns herself to death: "Our home is in the grave" (II.iii.148). Her reasons are, syntactically, always "yet . . . and yet" (II.iii.80), alternately wanting to preserve his "merit" (II.iii.82), insure her own sense of propriety as she acknowledges her "ruin" (II.iii.89), and guarantee his happiness in another marriage that is more "than a second bed" (II.iii.102). Her complementary dialogue with Ithocles is undeniably similar (III.iii): Penthea condemns Ithocles' sin by decrying her own torment as a form of self-reproach. This "miserable creature," this "whore," is the

martyr (III.iii.52) who is sacrificed as expiation for Ithocles' "bloody guilt" (III.iii.46), mourning her "reproachful match" (III.iii.47) as she excoriates his "ingratitude of nature" (III.iii.49). Only by killing her can Ithocles win her friendship (III.iii.34-35); only by confessing his tormented love for Calantha is he "reconcil'd" in suffering with his sister (III.iii.79), paradoxically becoming her "protector" as she avows her faithfulness to her fanatically suspicious husband (III.iii.125-129, 134-138).

Pentheas's "last will and testament" (III.vi) and her "mad scene" (IV.ii) exploit these divisive emotions for the last time. A bravura performance as her own personal anatomy of melancholy and de contemptu mundi, Pentheas's renunciation of virtue and youth represents "boldness" in eloquence, but requires the tolerance of a patient witness (III.vi.45) who appears to enjoy "harmless sport / Of mere imagination" (III.vi.66-67), temporarily hypnotized by persuasive rhetoric. And yet Pentheas's third and final request, that Calantha receive Ithocles' suit, earns only "displeasure" (III.vi.95) and the enormity of effort unseen by Calantha in the marshalling of Pentheas's energies of elocution seems, even to Pentheas, a waste of time for a brother "most unkind" (III.vi.106). Similarly, her aria of fear and madness is the troubling expression of her impulse to oblivion ("I must creep thither; / The journey is not long" - IV.ii.78-79), her bitterness ("O, my wrack'd honour, ruin'd by those tyrants, / A cruel brother and a desperate dotage!" - IV.ii.144-145), her sense of regret and poignant, forlorn affection ("I lov'd you once" - IV.ii.108; "Goodness! We had been happy" - IV.ii.115), her deep humiliation and ignominy ("To all memory / Pentheas's, poor Pentheas's

name is strumpeted" - IV.ii.147-148). There is true lucidity in Penthea's unbalanced mind, the summation of the multiple, ineluctable horrors which imprison her in the claustrophobic world of Sparta, from which only death is release and resolution.

By comparison Calantha seems less controversial, a more sober reflection of conventional behavior, a less striking theatrical profile. Yet when we understand Penthea, we understand her as well. A woman of "beauty, virtue, / Sweetness and singular perfections" (III.iv.16-17) who is cultivated and coveted by two men (Ithocles and Nearchus), Calantha possesses the aggressive authority of an instinctive ruler as she asserts "a masculine spirit" (V.ii.94) without condescension or pity. If she can quickly and resourcefully condemn Orgilus to execution, she can plaintively kneel before the "crowned" effigy of Ithocles and declare her insufficiency to rule "a nation warlike and inur'd to practice / Of policy and labour" (V.iii.10-11). From her first appearance in the play (I.ii) Calantha expresses an interest in Ithocles, and it is she who ultimately pursues him by making her intentions so obvious that she throws him a ring (IV.i.30) and eventually asks him to marry her (IV.iii.78-80), a triumph of will that makes Penthea's role in the play seem in comparison self-effacement and exaggerated passivity.

We might well consider Calantha as the most public protagonist in The Broken Heart, a woman whose behavior conforms most closely to the prevailing decorum, the most socially acceptable and politically prudent postures. She is the person who most can make a virtue out of conformity, who seems resourceful, serene, and assured - the model of personal poise and civic duty. She knows how to make a ceremonial honour

a personal one ("I myself, with mine own hands, have wrought / To crown thy temples this provincial garland" - I.ii.65-66) when Ithocles returns in triumph, and is both tactful and forceful enough to arrange a satisfactory marriage between Prophilus and Euphranea (II.ii). In her private talk with Penthea (III.vi) she is careful about privacy, not compulsive about it (III.vi.1-3), and it is typical of her to become alternately amused and skeptical of Penthea's insistent melancholy, alternately moved and enraged by the terms of the "will," to which she is "executrix" (III.vi.36). If her emotions make her "too much woman" (III.vi.43), her behavior here seems initially more plausible and sympathetic in what is perhaps her most debatable scene in the play.

It is not difficult to be both mystified and irritated by her remarkably stoic and dispassionate reaction to the multiple deaths of Ithocles, Penthea and Amelus (the king and her father),³⁰ behavior which induces incredulity and "amazment" (V.ii.15) in Bassanes and Orgilus (whose own behavior is questionable enough) and which seems, both aesthetically and morally, as much a violation of ceremony (music and dance) as the actual homicides. If this highly idiosyncratic scene is viewed in the larger context of the play, however, its sensationalism seems less objectionable. We are in fact exposed repeatedly to a world of stylized behavior and circumscribed sensation, where the psychological and physical acts of self-mutilation, of absolute deprivation of communal and personal love, produce a dangerous "liquefaction"³¹ of feeling into the explosive release of violence. If Calantha's unfeeling, spiritless, un pitying response seems too protective and too heartless, it is also compellingly reminiscent of other disguises, other forms of

visual and verbal evasiveness, what M. Joan Sergecaunt calls a "statuesque quality of cold restraint."³² Once again, the suggestive complementarity and paradoxical symmetry of characterization reinforce the parallel and contrary movements of the play. Calantha's coronation typically becomes her funeral, her marriage ceremony is simply a reunion with the corpse of Ithocles, and the abortive reconciliation of conflict promises little for a "gored state" whose new rulers seem mere survivors and unfortunate ones at that (Nearchus is an unsuccessful suitor of Calantha and Bassanes is the hapless husband of the suicide Penthea). Calantha's "antic gesture" (V.iii.68) of composure never really ends ("Let me die smiling" - V.iii. 76), and the audience, like Bassanes, can only "weep to see / Her smile in death" (V.iii.97-98). The cost of this "triumph," this "expense of spirit in a waste of shame," is no more agonizing and no less ennobling than the previously flawed epiphanies of the other characters.

Bassanes, a self-confessed "old, foolish, peevish, doting man" (V.iii.36), represents the play's fusion of comedy and tragedy, the one clear instance where considerations of characterization and genre cannot be discussed separately. It is not difficult to discover what is both grotesque and pathological about him: his delusions of cuckoldry render him patently absurd in contrast to what actually occurs in the play, and if his repentance seems abortive and abrupt, his real and terrifying isolation makes his conversion welcome, as at least a gesture toward decency.³³ This sense of isolation, coupled with a disjointed, abrasive, perhaps obscene, rhetoric,³⁴ makes Bassanes the closest approximation to a comic foil in the play, a satiric and ignominious counterpart to the more aristocratic and restrained posturings of the other characters.

What Orgilus observes as a "monster love" of "fear and jealousy" (I.i. 57-70) is, in an important sense, an explicit, more explosive variation of the simmering passions which consume the repressed selves of Ford's other Spartans. Bassanes' rant, however, and his exaggeration of suspicion and suffering, is so intense and so removed from subtlety, that he becomes a deliberate, ironic alternative to, and commentary on (like Mauruccio and Ferentes in Love's Sacrifice, Bergetto in 'Tis Pity and Perkin's rabble in Perkin Warbeck) what is presumably the "serious" action of The Broken Heart. Unlike previous plays of Ford, however, the comic and pathetic elements inherent in Bassanes' role have the capacity to inflict real harm, to intrude more threateningly into the affairs of the other characters.

Bassanes believes unquestioningly that "all women are false" (II.i.39), and his lurid suppositions³⁵ of infidelity and promiscuity are a preconceived absolute in total contrast to Penthea's equally extreme will to abstinence and renunciation. Bassanes wishes to imprison her from temptation, to make her invulnerable and unsullied from the corruptions of city and court: what he cannot and never does see is that her very avoidance of all human contact, her withering into death, is a much more potent form of self-destruction than any conventional vice or indulgence. It is perhaps one subtle yet unmistakable hint of unavoidable disaster that Bassanes' ignorance and intractability exists so early in the play: the "honour" which is assaulted and "bleeds to death" (II.i.35) is not, as he imagines, the casualty of urban decay or idle, malicious gossip; what ultimately and painfully occurs in the play is more a result of a mysterious, inflexible obedience, a subordination

of sexual desire to a higher command, the still, small voice of death.

It is typical of Bassanes that his rhetoric is as "deformed" as the adultery he imagines (II.i.5) and that his habit of speaking in inversion and paradox is a perfect mirror of the distortions inherent in his personality. No one but he in "rare distemper" (II.i.66) could say: "To be fair / Should yield presumption of a faulty soul" (II.i.62-63), or that "the way to poverty is to be rich" (II.i.70). No one but he could contrast "the whiteness of Penthea's name" (II.i.94) with epithets to Grausis as a "damnable bitch-fox" (II.i.120): apostrophe cannot avoid scatology. Only Bassanes could "sweat"³⁶ in such aberrant behavior and yet only in response to the suggestion (too much implying sterility) that he father a child (II.i.127). If he wishes to protect Penthea, one might ask why he insists on "testing"³⁷ her by asking her if she wishes to go to court. For a husband who initially seemed only to desire his wife's chastity, Bassanes now appears as a pander³⁸ who remorselessly subjects Penthea to temptations which make his cautionary motives insupportable, a hypocritical gesture, devoid of any real libertarianism:

We will to court, where, if it be thy pleasure,
 Thou shalt appear in such a ravishing lustre
 Of jewels above value, that the dames
 Who brave it there, in rage to be outshined,
 Shall hide them in their closets, and unseen
 Fret in their tears; while every wondering eye
 Shall crave none other brightness but thy presence.
 Choose thine own recreations, be a queen
 Of what delights thou fanciest best, what company,
 What place, what times. Do anything, do all things
 Youth can command, so thou wilt chase these clouds
 From the pure firmament of thy fair looks.

(II.i.77-88)

If there is a "lust committed by the eye" (II.i.3-4), it is in truth by Bassanes himself, who perverts faithfulness into "a mystical preparative to lewdness" (II.i.20), who conceals his "infinite agonies" (II.i.158) under a transparent, not very credible veneer of an open heart (II.i.133), suggesting that whatever sincerity and compassion he professes is in fact the unsavory reflection of one "too gross, too vulgar" (II.i.151). The impending marriage of Prophilus and Euphranea serves as a pretext for his hollow shows of affection: "The joys of marriage are the heaven on earth, / Life's paradise, . . . the soul's quiet, / Sinews of concord, earthly immortality, / Eternity of pleasures . . ." (II.ii.86-90). Bassanes is both commentator and participant in a merciless reduction of feeling, a satiric falsification of emotion, as he rationalizes and projects a tenuous security in public, only to flaunt his obscene imaginings in conflict with the fragile, repressed meditations of those who arouse his suspicions.

The brutishness and blindness implicit in his presentation is the result of minimal knowledge, applied all too grotesquely and terrifyingly. Bassanes is the perfect intruder, possessed by fear of betrayal and loneliness, forever imposing his angry, tortured presence on those who are already in mortal danger of destruction. Bassanes, then, is the disturbing exaggeration of tendencies already inherent in The Broken Heart - a crude, sometimes menacing, but not very plausible anodyne to the more compelling torments of others, and the comic, bestial catalyst of pain who adds to, rather than detracts from, the pervading malaise. Bassane's both punishes and ultimately repents, representing both persecutor and victim - the most explicit manifestation of how the play's

dispossessed and disenthralled characters are invariably hoisted with their own petards.

Bassanes' behavior is deliberate counterpoint to more tender and grievous moments: after Penthea's unhappy and unfruitful interview with Orgilus (II.iii), Bassanes' excoriations of the "rotten maggot" Grausis (II.iii.132), a dissonant rhetoric of "humours" (II.iii.135), is an astringent Stimmungsbruchung as well as a perfect visual correlative to the intensity of Penthea's sufferings; when Ithocles and Penthea are alone (III.iii), he once again invades a cloistered conversation, contemptuously referring to the "effeminacy" (III.ii.21) of the song which precedes his rude entry. But his own abrupt "repentance" (III.iii.130ff.) is itself humiliating and pathetic, his "desperate wound" (III.iii.130) is both sentimental and theatricalized, in ironic contrast to the sordid crimes, the "filthiness" he alludes to in Ithocles and Penthea, and like Ithocles, he seeks contrition but finds no respite for his grief. And whatever seems to create sympathy also stimulates sarcasm:

<u>Groneas.</u>	Fine humours! They become him.	
<u>Hemophil.</u>		How a'stares,
	Struts, puffs and sweats.	Most admirable lunacy! . . .
<u>Grausis.</u>		Out on him,
	These are his megrims, firks and melancholies.	
<u>Hemophil.</u>	Well said, old touch-hold.	
<u>Groneas.</u>		Kick him out at doors.
		(III.iii.104-105, 122-124)

All is not, as Bassanes believes, "silent, calm, secure" (III.ii.1), and the duality of his presentation emphasizes both the potential harm he has caused, his pathetic attempts to recover self-respect, and the harsh chorus of ridicule which accompanies both.³⁹

As if these ambivalent roles were not enough, Bassanes at times

also assumes the role of an omniscient choric figure as he forecasts the downfall of Ithocles (III.iii.98-99) and the terrible consequences of Orgilus' vengeance: "We're all turn'd madcaps" (V.i.4). Occasionally Bassanes also echoes the stoicism and total self-sacrifice of Penthea and Calantha when he avows the sincerity of his penitence ("I'll stand the execution with a constancy" - III.iii.157), and his willingness to accept the death of Penthea without complaint:

Continue man still;
 Make me the pattern of digesting evils,
 Who can outlive my mighty ones, not shrinking
 At such a pressure as would sink a soul
 Into what's most of death, the worst of horrors.
 But I have seal'd a covenant with sadness,
 And enter'd into bonds without condition,
 To stand these tempests calmly. . .

(V.ii.56-63)

It is indeed a measure of the paradoxical lessons the play expounds that Bassanes, certainly a strong candidate for the most irrational character in the play, can see through his own torment the general trauma and failing which the other protagonists share - the total surrender to self-pity and despair, the willful retreat from the felicity of nature:

But men, endow'd with reason and the use
 Of reason to distinguish from the chaff
 Of abject scarcity the quintessence,
 Soul, and elixir of the earth's abundance
 The treasures of the sea, the air, nay heaven,
 Repining at these glories of creation,
 Are verier beasts than beasts. . .

(IV.ii.22-28)

Bassanes is thus condemned to survive, to be participant in, and witness to, the pervading conflicts of The Broken Heart and his plural activities in the play both correspond to, and depart from, those of the

other characters. Like Ithocles, Bassanes repents the wrongs inflicted on Penthea but like Orgilus, his inflexible demands exacerbate her torment, rather than alleviate it. As Orgilus eulogizes Ithocles in the act of murdering him, so Bassanes praises Orgilus and assists him in performing the rites of bloodletting which, in full circle, require Ithocles' slaying. As Calantha endures calamity with dignity and impassiveness, so does Bassanes assert that "no tempests of commotion shall disquiet / The calms of my composure" (IV.ii.38-39). Equally compelling are the contrasts: Bassanes' vulgarity in speech and infantile delusions oppose the noble gestures and restrained feelings and conduct of his peers. While others conceal the true intensity of their emotions, he all too freely and callously indulges his rage and fury. He outlives Orgilus, Penthea, Calantha and Ithocles, but the waste and enervating melancholy of their lives provide small inheritance for one who must survive alone and rootless. While they sadly accept misfortune from the beginning, or achieve a momentary exultation of feeling, he never accepts his fate until it is too late to prevent loss of life and he never experiences even the brief satisfaction of reciprocated affection. Most important, although he begins to understand the misery which surrounds him, complete knowledge is denied him, and the "chronicle" of the play which he can describe but not entirely comprehend, reveals an oblique, disquieting vision:

. . . Reason is so clouded
 With the thick darkness of my infinite woes,
 That I forecast nor dangers, hopes, or safety.
 Give me some corner of the world to wear out
 The remnant of the minutes I must number,
 Where I may hear no sounds but sad complaints
 Of virgins who have lost contracted partners;

Of husbands howling that their wives were ravished
 By some untimely fate; of friends divided
 By churlish opposition; or fathers
 Weeping upon their children's slaughtered carcasses;
 Or daughters groaning o'er their fathers' hearses:
 And I can dwell there. . .

(V.iii.22-34)

In arguing for Shakespeare's supremacy as a poet and dramatist, T. S. Eliot once remarked that "writers like Ford . . . speak another and cruder language. In their poetry there is no symbolic value; theirs is good poetry and good drama, but it is poetry and drama of the surface."⁴⁰ In no other play of Ford's is there such a consistent and persuasive refutation of this opinion, for it is in The Broken Heart that Ford's succinct and original expression of metaphorical unity through coherent and comprehensive imagery is most clearly perceived. In discussing the suggestive use of language in the other tragedies, it was possible to see how a single-iterative pattern or an isolated example of visual symbolism (usually a masque or some other formal ritual or ceremony) intermittently revealed the play's meaning and form. Seen in those terms, Ford's achievement rested in his facility in making a narrowly applied structural principle serve credible thematic ends. Multum in parvo is an apt expression for Ford's resourcefulness and ingenuity: limited means create unlimited imaginative effects on the stage, a wealth of suggestion emanating from a threadbare physical arena.

In The Broken Heart this pattern is enhanced considerably. There is a veritable matrix, a truly symphonic texture of verbal and visual imagery (figurative language, stage ritual and ceremony, songs), which suggests that language is no longer a minor appendage or supplement to the play;⁴¹ instead, it is a forceful and eloquent complement to other

dramaturgic devices. Ford's connotative technique becomes the most potent imaginative medium for expressing, through repetition and variation, the equivocal capacity of words and gestures to narrate and explicate the central concerns of the play by "raising and sustaining emotion, in providing atmosphere or emphasising a theme."⁴²

The verbal imagery in The Broken Heart is organic, kinaesthetic, and archetypal. In a world of sensual deprivation and spiritual desiccation, it evokes paradoxical reverberations involving 1) sight and blindness; 2) the sense of taste and the physiological and psychological effects of metabolism and appetite; 3) the sensation of heat and "flames" and its resulting connotation of darkness and light; 4) the process of melting, evaporation and liquefaction, suggesting dissolution of form and shape. This elemental sequence of references has a sophisticated, allusive parallel and contrast in periodic references to 5) the Greek shadow-world of history and myth. stories which express in encapsulated form the petit drame which accompanies Ford's larger spectacle. These are the major patterns in the play and the way in which they are used reveals Ford's mature, sensitive awareness of the dramatic possibilities of expressive, symbolic speech: 1) there is obviously more emphasis placed on the qualitative and quantitative function of word-pictures; 2) the various image patterns all tend to reinforce the same recurring themes - reason confronting passion, affection threatened by ambition and jealousy, vengefulness opposed to forgetfulness, free will and fate, melancholy and anger, obedience and independence, self-control and self-sacrifice, love and death; 3) finally, these various patterns of imagery frequently occur together and in turn reinforce and comment upon each

other in certain crucial scenes.

Furthermore, there is a visual structure of stage ritual and ceremony, often evoking ironic or contradictory effects,⁴³ which serves as a cogent iconic correlative to spoken metaphor: betrothal and marriage, military triumph, the expression of a formal obligation through oath, dancing, coronation, funeral, and death by public execution or suicide. Finally, there is a unique interpolation - the musical and verbal accompaniment of songs - which appears four times in the play, and which provides a concluding summary of Ford's dramatic and thematic intents. The dramatist's careful and remarkably comprehensive articulation of iterated imagery, visual gesture, and musical verse, so suggestive of the ambivalent relationship of love and death in this play, becomes in fact the perfect medium by which the play truly speaks, the most convincing expression of Ford's dissonant design.

Seeing with what Shakespeare in Romeo and Juliet called "untainted eye" (I.ii.87)⁴⁴ represents a direct and compelling paradox in The Broken Heart. As Juliet observes, "Lovers can see to do their amorous rites / By their own beauties" (III.ii.8-9), but the "vision" inferred by such insularity, however intense and powerful, can make the wedding bed a grave. "Seeing" in The Broken Heart confirms "knowledge" induced only by desire, passion uneasily rationalized by intelligence, empiricism in the guise of imagination. The congenital incompatibility between reason and passion is imaged in the unstable mixture of affection and lust, perceptivity and distortion, wisdom and ignorance, implied in the shifting perspectives of human sight. To most of the characters in the play, seeing is an imperfect surrogate for believing: "Our eyes

can never pierce into the thoughts / For they are lodg'd too inward"
(IV.i.17-18).

For Bassanes, Penthea seems both an object of attraction and repulsion; her beauty is the unhealthy catalyst for fornication, "too full a prospect to temptation":

. . . There's a lust
Committed by the eye, that sweats and travaills,
Plots, wakes, contrives, till the deformed bear-whelp
Adultery be licked into the act,
The very act . . . That light shall be dammed up.

(II.i.3-7)

The irony is that Bassanes' vision is itself "deformed," twisted out of logic and reasonableness by his consuming preoccupation with an infidelity which does not exist; the darkness which presumably imprisons Penthea is in fact a perfect reflection of his own destructive ignorance. Bassanes' ironic concept of sight becomes doubly effective when he in fact must mask his true intentions to Penthea by deliberately tempting her with the blandishments of court life: "every wond'ring eye / Shall crave none other brightness but thy presence" (II.i.82-83). Bassanes' oscillating attitudes, contrasted with Penthea's simplicity and sincerity ("I need / No braveries nor cost of art . . ." - II.i.92-93) reaffirm his instability, his fear and resulting cruelty. His distorted vision isolates him from intelligence and common sense even as it separates Penthea from her own happiness and salvation, ultimately driving her to suicide by starvation, "a killing sight," "full of terror" (IV.ii.60, 74) to Ithocles and Orgilus, a fact initially incredible to Bassanes (IV.ii.51); whose delusion has helped to drive his wife insane. That Bassanes can see finally the visible evidence of Orgilus' crime (V.ii.

52-53) does not detract from his own culpability in creating a suitably claustrophobic and depressive atmosphere for her, and his newly-acquired "vision" seems at best a terribly belated and terrifying peripeteia.

Penthea's effect on Orgilus' sensibility is equally acute and painful.⁴⁵ What Bassanes feared as susceptibility to adultery in Penthea is in fact true only for Orgilus, who by right of betrothal denies any "adultery" at all as he claims his "lawful" bride. Penthea's beauty enables him to "gaze my fill" (IV.i.156), but the intensity of his concentration only incites him in the end to kill Ithocles in vengeance: "Penthea's sacred eyes shall lend new courage" (IV.iv.57). He disguises his intentions from himself, and his "disguise" as scholar becomes "the shroud in which my cares / Are folded up from view of common eyes" (II.iii.49-50). Penthea's insanity becomes an awesome spectacle, "misery past cure," which seems to Orgilus a "miracle," visible and ominously destructive (IV.ii.45-46, 50). Penthea, who herself believed that in waking she actually "slept" (IV.ii.174), that life itself possessed the opacity and inscrutability of a dream, is ultimately avenged by a man who denies oracles (and ironically disclaims his identity with Oedipus - IV.i.141), who sees "lover's eyes / Lock'd in endless dreams" (IV.iii.148-149), and who to the end sees only darkness, a congenital dislocation and alienation: "A mist hangs o'er mine eyes; the sun's bright splendour / Is clouded in an everlasting shadow" (V.ii.151-152). Mercutio could as well have been talking to Orgilus as Romeo when he observed: "If love be blind, love cannot hit the mark" (II.i.33).

As interpreted through the equivocal image of seeing and sight, the relationship of Ithocles and Calantha is equally painful and dis-

concerting. Prophilus believes that seeing Ithocles will confirm the "truth" and "judgment" that this military hero is the epitome of "moderation" and "calmness of nature" - "a miracle of man" (I.ii.35-36, 49), and indeed Calantha believes his achievement in battle "is borne so past the view of common sight" (I.ii.64) that she herself bestows the garland in public. Yet Ithocles' heroic impulse is based on an "ambition" more troubling than satisfying: to him it seems a "seeled," blinded dove, soaring higher and higher into the sky, but without direction or goal, ultimately exploding like a firecracker and destroying itself by its own centrifugal energy (II.ii.3-8). Certainly the torment and violence induced by Ithocles' "ambition" in marrying Penthea to Bassanes and his equally deliberate pursuit of Calantha lead to consequences horrifying and ruinous. That his ignorance can be as deadly as Orgilus' is attested to by his interview with Penthea, who already sees the unhappy bond which unites their fates:

Penthea. Suppose you were contracted to her, would it not
Split even your very soul to see her father
Snatch her out of your arms against her will
And force her on the Prince of Argos?

Ithocles. Trouble not
The fountains of mine eyes with thine own story;
I sweat in blood for't.

(III.iii.74-79)

When sight and blindness conflict, as they do here, isolation in ignorance and irremediable suffering result. And yet as Penthea can "see" Ithocles suffering in love for Calantha and master her disaffection to further his suit, so Calantha can "melt" her eyes (III.vi.45 - a good example of the way in which two image patterns "blend") in sympathy for Penthea's plight even as Penthea urges her to look "with an eye of

pity" (III.vi.82) on Ithocles, a request which initially and paradoxically produces only displeasure in Calantha, who has yet to "see" her love for him. That Ithocles is ultimately urged never to be far from Calantha's sight (IV.iii.97) resolves the dilemma, but only temporarily, for it is only in death, crowned and enthroned as a silent husband in effigy to Calantha, that she will "see" him eternally (V.iii.s.d.). Imagery in this way becomes an acceptable and necessary means of seeing the paradoxical vision of the play in miniature, to confirm what has already been suggested in equally potent ways by characterization, and which, in this particular instance, becomes the reciprocal verbal expression of our own duality of "sight" as we observe or read the play.

The second instance of imagery as suggestive commentary on the dramatic action involves the metaphorical implications of heat and fire in connoting the intensity of feeling which pervades The Broken Heart. Repeated references to "flames" evoke a verbal emblem of passion as both consummation and purgation, what T. S. Eliot has called "the intolerable shirt of flame / Which human power cannot remove."⁴⁶ The ambiguous effects of love seem a mystery to Orgilus: "The deities / Themselves are not secure in searching out / The secrets of those flames, which hidden waste / A breast made tributary to the laws / Of beauty . . ." (I.iii. 36-40). The sense of helplessness in the face of tremendous pressure is not far removed from the "hidden," unseen power of desire which obfuscates insight and eyesight. Orgilus is the servant of Penthea, "wasted" by slavish devotion to her beauty, in secret and alone. His suspicious motives for leaving Sparta are not difficult to discover, since "books and love of knowledge / Inflamm" (I.i.12-13) him, and the sensations of

ignition and intense heat when juxtaposed with "intellectual" pursuits is, even in the opening scene of the play, suggestive of the passions which ultimately impel him to declaim his love for Penthea, in "disguise." A further irony in Orgilus' deception is suggested by Prophilus' deluded response to the "happy creature" who acts as go-between to Euphranea:

Such people toil not, sweet, in heats of state
Nor sink in thaws of greatness; their affections
Keep order with the limits of their modesty;
Their love is love of virtue . . .

(I.iii.137-140)

This fearful image is equally apparent to Ithocles. "Ambition" is both the "stench and smoke" (II.ii.8) of exploding firecrackers, the ominous heritage of pride and aggressiveness common to "the heat / Of an unsteady youth" (II.ii.45), remorseful over the grief he has caused his sister. It is the sad fate of Ithocles, then, to be caught between the impulses of his "fiery mettle" (III.iii.112) and the poor wretch "scorch'd" by the flames of Calantha's refusal (III.vi.87). Even mytho-poetically, Ithocles seems the prisoner of fire: he is variously called "Ixion" (III.iii.98-99; IV.1.69-71) and "Phaeton" (IV.iv.26), and since one of these legendary figures was consumed by fire from the sun and the other was a seducer, the reference is perfectly suited to a man who will be destroyed both by ambition and by passion.⁴⁷

The ambiguous nature of marriage and chastity is a familiar theme of The Broken Heart and, as a final acknowledgment of the primacy of "fiery" figurative language, we might note that the "fires" of Vesta (I.i.98) and Hymen (I.iii.173; III.iv.70-73) "sanctify" Euphranea's mar-

riage as a sad, ironic alternative to the fates of Penthea, whose "virgin dowry which my birth bestow'd / Is ravish'd by another" (II.iii.99-100), and Calantha, who will die unhappily chaste. Penthea, after all, is another "Pandora," who created more dilemmas than she solved and who married the wrong husband (III.iii.135), another "Juno" seduced (or in reference to Ithocles, simply betrayed to another man) and abandoned.⁴⁸ Wrong choices, wrong directions, sad endings - this is the predictable legacy of a play whose songs celebrate "no heat, no light," when "lovers' eyes . . . / Ope no more" (IV.iii.146, 151).

In a play where one protagonist dies of starvation and another dies of bloodletting, it is not surprising to discover that another function of figurative language is to suggest the reversal or inversion of physiological processes of metabolism and appetite or nourishment, and a concordant natural but equally destructive cycle of evaporation, melting and liquefaction. The sense of uprooting, of aborted growth (IV.ii.205-207) corresponds closely to the erosion of human feeling as it is consumed by the poisonous plant "aconite" (I.1.37) and the perversion of these natural processes occurs, not by coincidence, with the anxious, furtive efforts of the major characters in the play to disguise or repress their true feelings. There is, as I have pointed out previously, a disturbing but unmistakable correlation between Orgilus' melancholy and his sense that life has been totally and absolutely destroyed by the toxic plant "whose ripened fruit hath ravished / All health, all comfort of a happy life" (I.1.36-37). As in 'Tis Pity, the heart as physiological organ symbolizes both the need for intensity, intimacy and loyalty in human relationships as well as the ubiquitous warning of the dangers

which continually threaten those relationships. Thus the tension between Orgilus' unbreakable bond with Penthea and her forced liaison with Bassanes is suggested by a "usurped heart" (I.i.52), Bassanes' anger at his wife's presumed betrayal is concealed by his politic affection ("How fares my heart's best joy?" - II.i.73; "To all my heart is open" - II.i.135), the comparative happiness and security of the marriage of Prophilus and Euphranea, ironically suggested by Ithocles ("'T had been pity / To sunder hearts so equally consented" - II.ii.99-100), the arbitrary and callous severance of Penthea's affection ("cruelty enforc'd / Divorce betwixt my body and my heart" - II.iii.56-57), the pain experienced by Orgilus in seeing Penthea crushed by starvation and insanity (IV.i.111), her own tormented awareness of Ithocles' guilt as it conflicts with the happiness her efforts have insured ("Alas, his heart / Is crept into the cabinet of the princess" - IV.ii.117-118), Ithocles' "misgiving heart" (IV.iii.154) when his love for Penthea and Orgilus is rudely interrupted by the funeral elegy for Penthea, and Orgilus' vengeful triumph offset by its meagre compensation of a "cold heart" (V.ii.153).

The elemental opposite to fire, the perfect complement to the metabolic process, water also symbolizes the equivocal resonances of the play's key scenes. Thus the rarefied, sweetened, sacerdotal quality of "dew" ironically suggests the false complacency of Orgilus' temporary disguise of identity and feelings, complemented by Prophilus' image of him as a man of "modesty" and "virtue":

Orgilus.

I am, gay creature,
With pardon of your deities, a mushroom
On whom the dew of heaven drops now and then;
The sun shines on me too, I thank his beams;
Sometimes I feel their warmth, and eat and sleep. . . .

Prophilus.

Happy creatures!
Such people toil not, sweet, in heats of state,

Nor sink in thaws of greatness; their affections
 Keep order with the limits of their modesty;
 Their love is love of virtue. . .

(I.iii.129-133; 136-140)

Similarly, Penthea is described by Bassanes (ironically, since he is the paradigm of the jealous husband) as "the pearls of transparent dew" (II. i.69), her luminous and delicate features contrasting markedly with the tenseness of her situation, in which those traits are severely distorted by the figments of Bassanes' imagination. Bassanes' "sweating," and Ithocles' as well, symbolize in opposite contexts the psychic torment betrayed by bodily reactions, the liquidity of shame and repressed guilt. Ithocles and Orgilus cannot or will not decipher Tecnicus' prophecy, and their failure to comprehend their own misfortune, the enigma which defines their precious few moments of mortality, produces "tears" as a "witness" to their sad fate (IV.i.136-137). Finally, Orgilus' ritualistic execution by letting his own blood flow freely seems to epitomize the waste, the gratuitous indulgence of "bubbling life out" (V.ii.106). His one true moment of release, of psychic and physical liberation, occurs paradoxically when life is literally drained out of him, when the suggestion of a naturally flowing river or stream ends only as "life's fountain is dried up" (V.ii.149). The man who exhibited a taste for "fierce and eager bloodshed" (V.ii.113) now opens his own veins to relinquish "lusty wine" (V.ii.124), the "vigour" and "nimbleness" (V.ii. 128, 126) of his efforts ending in the terminal frigidity of death. It is typical of The Broken Heart and its immobilized protagonists that their most life-affirming moments (in a play which seems to deny life at every turn) occur precisely when death is most urgently welcomed.

"The images appear more in clusters, are more compact, stand out from the context more colourfully and strikingly and (in a longer passage) often crowd so closely that the effect and the impression of this passage seems to lie solely in the imagery": so did Wolfgang Clemen describe the Fourth Act of Shakespeare's The Winter's Tale,⁴⁹ and his remarks might well apply to two important scenes of The Broken Heart, if we make the necessary qualifications and remember that our purpose in this study is not to compare two playwrights but reevaluate only one. The artistic evolution of Ford's imagistic vision is perhaps most persuasively revealed in Penthea's confrontations with Orgilus (II.iii.18-41) and Ithocles (III.iii.11-30), two scenes which combine the most telling expressions of drama and poetry in the play.

We must remind ourselves that the dialogue with Orgilus occurs in the context of psychic and physical dissimulation. Penthea, told by Prophilus of Ithocles' inexplicable "sadness" (1.6), awaits his presence in the company of a scholarly man whose behavior she finds increasingly appalling. "Aplotes" seems too intimate, too eager to make their conversation a "feast" for the gods (1.20). This sense of unsatisfied appetite, the powerful stimulant of taste, smell and "sight of banquet" (1.36), is the perfect figurative equivalent for the repressed sexuality of Orgilus, hidden by "disguise," "whilst the body pines, / Not relishing the real taste of food" (11.36-37). The inexorable pressure towards satiety is in fact insatiable, a telling illustration of irrepressible sensuality. The countercurrents of decorum and desperation are vivid and frightening; even when Penthea discovers who "Aplotes" really is, all she can do in returning his love is to plead with him to relinquish all desires "which

might give deeper wounds to discontents" (II.iii.85):

<u>Orgilus.</u>	What heaven Refines mortality from dross of earth, But such as uncompounded beauty allows With glorified perfection?
<u>Pentheas.</u>	Set thy wits In a less wild proportion.
<u>Orgilus.</u>	Time can never On the white table of unguilty faith Write counterfeit dishonour. Turn those eyes, The arrows of pure love, upon that fire Which once rose to a flame, perfum'd with vows As sweetly scented as the incense smoking On Vesta's altars; virgin tears, like The holiest odours, sprinkled dews to feed 'em And to increase their fervour.
<u>Pentheas.</u>	Be not frantic.

(11.21-33)

What is presumably the apostrophe to spiritual beauty exacerbates the tension between what Orgilus sees as his exclusive protestation of purity and what Penthea sees (partially since she has not seen through his disguise) as a more tortured, irrational, more sensual explosion of emotion. The ingenuity of Orgilus' "concoct," the intensity of his hyperbole, makes the "glorified perfection" of Penthea more unattainable even as it quickens his own passion, distancing him from the fulfillment of his desire. He regards his own "mortality" as elevated and purified by the contemplation of Penthea's loveliness; she in an inversely proportionate reaction recoils in anxiety and fear to what she regards as license and irrationality. Her "unguilty faith" pulls her in two directions, neither of which satisfies her, Bassanes, or Orgilus. The delicate, insistent sensuality of incense and perfume, sweetness and smoke, contrasts noticeably with the suggestion of "holiest odours, the sanctity of plighted vows, the ceremony of chaste affection "on Vesta's altars." The

exaggerated image of "virgin tears" which "increase" the "fervour" of love's fires is the perfect correlative to the emotions of Orgilus and Penthea, which enlarge desire as they purport to extinguish it. The inviolability of "pure love" thus becomes the very means by which it is intensified and ultimately destroyed. Two inferences are clear: all of the important image patterns of the play converge in this passage, reciprocally stating the basic paradoxes of the play; the irony of the immediate dramatic situation is heightened if we remember that it is only after this dialogue that Orgilus symbolically removes his disguise, unsuccessfully tries to persuade Penthea to return to him, and finally resumes his impersonation. The more things change, the more they remain the same.

Though Ithocles' momentary happiness (IV.iii.97-98) in receiving Calantha's love seems an explicit alternative to the total frustration of feeling in Orgilus, Penthea's tormented presence also emphasises her brother's misery when he is forced to endure the double burden of remorse for "the heat / Of an unsteady youth" (II.ii.44-45) which caused his sister's unhappy marriage, and repressed passion for the unrequited love for Calantha:

Ithocles.

Sad Penthea,
Thou canst not be too cruel. My rash spleen
Hath with a violent hand pluck'd from thy bosom
A lover-bless'd heart to grind it into dust,
For which mine's now a-breaking.

Penthea.

Not yet, heaven,
I do beseech thee. First let some wild fires
Scorch, not consume it; may the heat be cherish'd
With desires infinite but hopes impossible.

Ithocles.

Wrong'd soul, thy prayers are heard.

Penthea.

Here, lo, I breathe,
A miserable creature led to ruin
By an unnatural brother.

Ithocles.

I consume

In languishing affections for that trespass,
Yet cannot die.

Pentheia.

The handmaid to the wages

Of county toil drinks the untroubled streams
With leaping kids and with the bleating lambs,
And so allays her thirst secure, whiles I
Quench my hot sighs with fleetings of my tears.

Ithocles.

The labourer doth eat his coarsest bread,
Earn'd with his sweat, and lies him down to sleep,
Whiles every bit I touch turns in digestion
To gall, as bitter as Penthea's curse.

(III.iii.11-30)

Once again the quintessential language of an important scene expresses the sense of plural catastrophes in conflict: Ithocles' heart breaks as he "grinds" Penthea's "into dust" and the "fires" which consume both Orgilus and Penthea are for Ithocles equally perpetual, with "desires infinite," this sense of replication being the exquisite refinement of unending torment. The death of love is death in life for Ithocles, whose "tears" cannot temper the insatiable "thirst" of Penthea's isolated, desiccated affection. "Languishing affections" are enervating and self-consuming in the wasteful melancholy; rather than purge and refine their torment, Ithocles and Penthea (like Orgilus and Penthea in the previous scene) are condemned to the torture of "hopes impossible." She dies imprisoned in her own despair, and his brief moment of satisfaction is interrupted permanently as he is "discovered in a chair" (note the similarity in stage directions) by the vengeful Orgilus in Act IV. The "fire" of Ithocles' cruelty, his ambitious energies, ravages and quickly disintegrates his starving, insane sister (IV.iv.25) and for Ithocles, Penthea, Orgilus, and Calantha, the process of love invariably becomes a gruesome nightmare, the annihilation of brightness and warmth, where "no heat, no

light / Now remains" (IV.iii.146-147).

These two episodes clarify and elaborate the intrinsic design of Ford's thematic metaphors. They link the most affecting and emotionally intense and frustrating encounters between Penthea, her brother, and her lover, when the play seems poised between two constricting pressures, two unenviable alternatives to an irreconcilable problem. They reveal how the image cluster (heart, fire, water, sight, myth) evokes the complex emotions of the characters, often in conflict with themselves and with each other. Orgilus idolized Penthea, and Ithocles makes her a martyr to his sinfulness, redeeming her unhappy life by the tributes offered when "wrong'd maids / And married wives shall to thy hallowed shrine / Offer their orisons, and sacrifice / Pure turtles crown'd with myrtle" (III.iii.52-55). The "coarseness" of Ithocles' assault on Penthea's happiness is in direct proportion to the suffering he endures at her bitter reproaches and his silent mooning for Calantha. How typical then, that the barren hopes of both should be expressed by the several strands of patterned, figurative language which artfully connect their agonies with the play's central, controlling vision.

Rhetoric becomes visible in The Broken Heart when visual gesture and ritual complement and enrich the verbal suggestiveness of metaphor, in iteration and repeated equivocation. Euphranea swears that she will never marry without Orgilus' consent, and the reader-spectator cannot avoid seeing the ironic implications of a vow which affirms behavior Orgilus never would condone as proper treatment of Penthea (also under the authoritarian rule of a brother): the formal agreement seems beside the point when Orgilus overhears in disguise the clandestine meeting of

Euphranea and Prophilus and voices his disillusionment that "there is no faith in woman" (I.iii.90). Similarly, the act of allegiance implied by the gesture of kneeling also suggests how the ceremony of the stage can reinforce the equivocal impulses of the play. Orgilus kneels before Penthea (II.iii) and fervently declares his love for her, as Penthea had previously knelt to him, clasping his hand and kissing it (II.iii.65-66). The brief ceremony is, however, ultimately undercut by her equally abrupt dismissal of his suit, and we see the immediate, disturbing effect of the prevailing relationships in the play: a stalemate of energy, a futility of effort, the brevity and instability of distorted affection. Calantha's sudden and dramatic show of love for Ithocles as she throws him her ring (IV.i) moves him to kneel and offer it to her as a formal token of endearment: the scene represents perhaps the most consummate and meaningful expression of positive romantic feeling in the play, but the poor manners of Amelus (IV.i.31, 35-36), Armostes' warning not to be rash in "opinion" (IV.i.72), and the ominous warning of Orgilus' intent through the incantatory prophecy of Tecnicus (IV.i.138-139), qualify and modulate Ithocles' joy to conform to the obvious contrasts in feeling represented by the other characters. Finally, in a play where most of the characters find fulfillment only in death, it is to be expected that Calantha's obeisance to her dead lover is expressed by her "kneeling" at the altar where his corpse is placed (V.iii.s.d.).

Ithocles, it will be seen, dies as suddenly as he finds love, the pawn of mutability and his own sinful, misguided relationships with Penthea and Orgilus. The man who enters the play in military triumph (I.ii) and heroic pageantry departs this world treacherously caught in the

"engine" (IV.iv.21-22) of his malefactor. By the ceremonies of homicide and suicide we can similarly observe how the other protagonists die, in rites which symbolize the honor and futility of their lives. Thus Penthea dies by starvation, slowly consumed by the pathological, insane extremes of melancholy and guilt. She sits in a chair "veiled" and this sense of iconic mystery, a woman wrapped in shadows and enigmas, is a perfect visual commentary on her presence in the play, quickly followed by her brother's more savage torment as he is stabbed helplessly and repeatedly by Orgilus. Orgilus himself confesses his crime formally and is permitted to be his own executioner by opening his vein and bleeding to death, another form of "starvation," "bubbling life out" (V.ii.106), which terminates as "life's fountain is dried up" (V.ii.149).

It is not surprising, then, that the marriage of Prophilus and Euphranea (III.v) and the impending nuptials of Ithocles and Calantha (IV.i; IV.iii) respectively precede and follow Penthea's preparations for death (III.vi; IV.ii), that the formal recitation of Tecneus' Delphic prophecy and the failing health of her father occur precisely at the moment of Calantha's "bridal sports," her "whole felicity" (IV.iii.73, 97). The antinomy of "severe passion" (II.ii.66), so characteristic of the play, is nowhere more in evidence than when the harsh news of her three most intimate friends intrudes on the formal serenity of her dance (V.ii), when the funeral of Ithocles cannot be observed apart from the execution of his murderer, the moment when Calantha's coronation becomes her last will and testament (V.iii). Stage directions in The Broken Heart are both explicit and elaborate (IV.iv; V.ii; V.iii), paradoxically expressing the most vocal and vivid sensations in silent spectacle:

Penthea is carried in a chair, "veiled," and placed on the side of the stage, ominously facing the "engine" prepared for Ithocles. Presumably the maids who mourn for her continue to do so, oblivious to Orgilus' brutal assault on Ithocles. In the dance sequence which precedes Calantha's discovery of murder, there is "loud music" (contrasting with the "soft music" of V.iii), and then the entrance and symmetrical movements of the participants, their dignified composure upset by the terrible news brought by Orgilus, Armostes and Bassanes who, in equally ordered fashion, whisper their terrible tidings to Calantha. Finally, the last scene opens with "an altar covered with white": the purity of chastity, self-sacrifice, and the blank inscrutability of death is instantaneously imaged on the stage and in the costumes of the various mourners. The elevated, sublime spectacle of carefully contrived ritual for Ithocles contrasts with the mutable, menacing events of his life. Music, kneeling, the sight of Ithocles "crowned" all indicate Ford's careful attention to stage spectacle as an implied, ironic commentary on the sense of completion and order which the protagonists fail to find in life. The structure of Ford's play is in fact a fusion of such disparate elements, a grafting of unequal and ill-fitting parts onto the dramatic whole, as the play's most telling prophecy becomes its most persuasive visual commentary: "The Lifeless Trunk shall wed the Broken Heart" (V.iii.100).

If music is "preeminently the language of feeling,"⁵⁰ the four songs which Ford interpolates into crucial episodes of The Broken Heart cannot be less than an original and fundamental element of form and meaning in a play so lyrically intense and eloquent. W. H. Auden's

essay on "Music in Shakespeare"⁵¹ has proved extremely valuable in discovering the important contribution made by music and song in Elizabethan drama. Such auditory pleasure is not simply the illusion of stopped-time to dramatic action or a momentary escape through casual, seemingly gratuitous entertainment. Rather, songs are deceptively simple condensations of the thematic core of the play, much more integrated into the texture of the play than is often suspected, less an isolated structural element than an authentic, autonomous equal with other creative uses of dramatic technique. Music and text form a true paradoxical ambience, fusing the logic of words and the emotive and aural resonance of speech and melody, forcing the listener to concentrate on both the intellectual message and the expressivity of the medium through which it is conveyed. Both the content and context must be understood if the reader-spectator wishes to forego passive hearing and collaborate in active listening:⁵²

"Some high tun'd poem / Hereafter shall deliver to posterity / The writer's glory and his subject's triumph" (V.ii.131-133).

The first song (III.ii.1-16) occurs immediately after Orgilus' temporarily successful efforts to convince Tecnicus of the sincerity of his scholarly pursuits and immediately before the exposure of his true intentions is made clear in Penthea's tormented interview with Ithocles. Each confesses the hopelessness of love and the inevitability of death, and the quiet melancholy of the scene soon evaporates in the menacing, ultimately foolish accusations of Bassanes (III.iii). The song is a formulation of paradoxes - "painting thoughts," quantifying and describing every fantasy of sleep, "grasping a sigh," "rob a virgin's honor chastely," counting every second that passes - and these logical impossi-

bilities pale in contrast to the supreme failure of "all loves" and "all arts" to "display / Beauty's beauty." Certainly the extremities of passion exhibited by both Ithocles, Orgilus and Bassanes (who refers to Penthea in a sudden moment of contrition in the next scene as "light of beauty" - III.iii.129) in trying to possess Penthea's beauty through passionate rhetoric and violent action illustrate the failure of men to appreciate the supra-rational and inexpressible qualities of female beauty, which in Ford's play invariably becomes the pretext for irrational, self-destructive behavior. This song celebrates (in typically oxymoronic style) futility, the negation of creativity (both biological and aesthetic aspects), the insufficiency of human sensibility to perceive and control what it most covets. All the central characters in The Broken Heart (with the possible exception of Prophilus and Euphranea) "do, shall, and must obey" the slavish commandments to love and die, to seek absolute renunciation of desire as they achieve absolute dissolution of the body which contains that desire. Obedience is, after all, the most powerful compulsion in the play; often a substitute for indulgence in the guise of self-control and subordination of feeling, obedience is an almost irresistible catalyst toward self-destruction. As Penthea submits to death as the penalty for being a "wife" to two men, as Orgilus and Ithocles exchange noble gestures in "obedience" to their appointed roles as executioner and victim, revenger and his "villainous" prey, as Calantha fulfills her public function as queen while dying obedient to father and lover, ever "smiling" (V.iii.76) - these willful pursuits of death are all echoed in the first song.

The second song (III.v.70-81) is an epithalamium sung by Orgilus

to celebrate his sister's impending marriage and becomes a fitting ironic qualification to what is the only satisfying liaison in the play. "Comforts lasting, loves increasing" is something which can never be achieved by Orgilus, a temporary moment of happiness in a play full of funereal weddings. Suggestions of "fruitful issues," the cyclical pattern of renewal and re-creation ("every spring another youth"), all are savagely undercut by the play's eventual and permanent movement toward annihilation in the spectacle of multiple murder. Hope here seems poignant, as this scene is followed by Penthea's morbid "perfect mirror" (III.vi.27) of a wasted, miserable life, her sad testament of "three poor jewels" (III.vi.49) - youth, fame, and heart. This song illustrates what the play is unable to achieve; the pressures of mortality and fatality make hymeneal bliss impossible.

The third song (IV.iii.142-153) is even more ironic in context. Its "horrid stillness" (IV.iii.184) follows both the betrothal of Ithocles and Calantha, the growing friendship between Ithocles and Orgilus, and is the perfect lyrical accompaniment to Penthea's mad scene, her subsequent death, and Ithocles' brutal murder. The equation suggested by the juxtaposition of "a life as chaste as fate" and the ashen remains of "burnt tapers" connotes powerfully the tormented soul of Penthea. "No heat, no light /Now remains; 'tis ever night": death is eternal and cold, the extinction of the vital signs of sight and feeling. The ignorance of the characters in confronting their own emotions, their absolute failure to achieve any viable or enduring relationship - all these suggest the play's persistent concern with, and portrayal of, paralysis both psychic and physical as "love is dead . . .

lock'd in endless dreams." The perpetuity of martyrdom, of continual self-sacrifice, "th' extremes of all extremes," is the process by which Ford explains the infinity of suffering which his characters must endure. When "love dies," death is not final, an escape or release from torment. Instead, love is "ever, ever dying," a perverse, nihilistic process of repeated dissolution and disintegration.⁵³

The fourth song (V.iii.81-93) accompanies Calantha's death, the final catastrophe of the play, commanded by her and "fitted for my end" (V.iii.80). It is sung by all the surviving characters on stage, and its last line echoes Tecnicus' prophecy of a "broken heart." It is an appeal for stoicism as an antidote to superficial pleasures of "th' outward senses," a cautionary tale against the ravages of time, a true mutability canto: "Time alone doth change and last." The paradoxes of "sorrows mingled with contents," "love only reigns in death," as "art / Can find no comfort for a broken heart," remain the most clear and concise summary of the audience's experience and the author's complex theatrical vision. Antinomies collide and dissolve in dynamic tension against the "art" of the purposefully distorted "symmetry" of Ford's dissonant design. The absolute negative - death - is after all the supreme apotheosis, the complete absence of life flawed and failing, the headlong pursuit of oblivion. This concluding song is also the play's most succinct commentary on Ford's tragic art, the sweetness of a life extinguished, the inconsolable clean and astringent separation of aesthetics and morality. Art cannot control or refine what life cannot sustain, and the hollow echo of a sad song is, as Shakespeare observed, a querulous sort of comfort:

Music to hear, why hear'st thou music sadly?
 Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy:
 Why lov'st thou that which thou receiv'st not gladly,
 Or else receiv'st with pleasure thine annoy?⁵⁴

The sensitive discriminations necessary to literary criticism are, in the end, the direct result of careful re-reading and reevaluation of the experience of literature. What seems systematic and inductive in method is perfectly useless unless it serves as a catalyst which breeds familiarity and understanding in the reader. The present study, it may be suggested, is valuable because it attempts to ask the same questions posed in the classroom: How can one more fully comprehend a complex and elusive work of art that resists facile explanation? What are the specific technical or formal elements that enable the artist to achieve his thematic purpose? Does an understanding of general aesthetic principles common to a particular historical period make the study of any particular discipline, genre, or author equally intelligible? The answer to these questions is merely a beginning: the quality of criticism and the quality of literature are worthy of each other only so long as the business of criticism does not intrude upon and supersede the capacity of literature to express plural, even contradictory responses to the human condition. This study is an essay in interpretation and a demonstration of what hopefully is a valid process of explicating the work of one Jacobean dramatist - John Ford. The paradoxical vision of mannerist art represents a consistent yet varied thematic and structural principle in evaluating elements of characterization, genre, and language in his four tragedies. These are not casual remarks and one does not easily earn

the right to say them; if, however, they are accepted and properly understood, we will begin to appreciate the fascination of the Renaissance for "that subtle knot, which makes us man."⁵⁵

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

¹ All citations from the text are taken from John Ford, Three Plays, edited by Keith Sturges (London, 1970).

² See in particular Franklin Dickey, Not Wisely But Too Well: Shakespeare's Love Tragedies (San Marino, 1957).

³ Charles MacDonald notes Ford's use of verbal and thematic "antilogies" (reason-passion, honor-opinion, virtue-ambition) and believes The Broken Heart represents a fusion of two popular dramatic genres: revenge tragedy and precieux-drama. Both of these theatrical conventions express the moral and aesthetic conflict between stylized violence and codified romance. See The Rhetoric of Tragedy: Form in Stuart Drama (Amherst, 1966), pp. 314-333. Fredson Bowers, in his well-known study of Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy (Princeton, 1940) notes that "the moral seems rather a double one: first, the cruelty of enforcing love; and, second, the fact that a man must always pay for his past misdeeds. To these may possibly be added a third, the cruelty of the duty to revenge . . . (Orgilus) has no sense of outraged retaliation but only of justice. Hence . . . the portrayal of Orgilus as a wronged man suddenly driven beyond the bounds of reason by Penthea's madness and death before he thinks of revenge, the restraint in the act of vengeance, and finally the construction whereby the revenge concludes the fourth act, leaving the entire fifth act for the working-out of the fates of the various characters - all indicate a softening of the convention of revenge on the stage. . ." (pp. 211, 213). There are, however, several problems which Bowers ignores: why does Orgilus promise "swift deceits" (I.iii.177) and then just as abruptly discard his disguise of "scholar"? How can we be sure that Orgilus has not already decided to revenge his humiliation from Penthea's refusal of his suit when he says, rather ambiguously, "I'll tear my veil of politic French off, / And stand up like a man resolv'd to do; / Action, not words, shall show me" (II.iii.124-126). What "action" is implied here? Why do Tecnicus and Crotolon fear his continual concealment of his passion, as Tecnicus' "oracle" warns (IV.i.139, before Orgilus witnesses Penthea's mad scene) that "revenge proves its own executioner," and as Crotolon's fear is revealed in anguished suspicion: "Thou hast brought back a worse infection with thee, / Infection of thy mind; which, as thou sayst, / Threatens the desolation of our family" (III.v.43-45). There may be no satisfying answer, but the play requires more examination and clarification of "revenge" elements.

⁴ Cf. Robert Ornstein, The Moral Vision of Jacobean Tragedy (Madison, 1965): ". . . The Broken Heart, like Ford's other tragedies, depicts the warping of love that cannot grow and mature. . ." (p. 216).

⁵ One recent critic of Ford has noted "the inability of man to avoid suffering and death, with his destruction implicit in moral paradoxes which he cannot resolve." (Irving Ribner, Jacobean Tragedy, London, 1962, p. 161).

⁶ Una Ellis-Fermor (The Jacobean Drama, London, 1965) believes the theme of The Broken Heart to be tripartite: "honor, courage, and continence" (p. 235).

⁷ Susanne Langer, Feeling and Form (New York, 1953), p. 351.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ A famous critical distinction made by Sir Philip Sidney in his Defense of Poetry (1595), which has interesting moral and aesthetic applications to the creative process in all the arts, especially in its suggestions of the artist's paradoxical function as vates and poietes ("prophet" and "maker"). I have quoted from Herschel Baker and Hyder Rollins, The Renaissance in England (Boston, 1954), p. 608.

¹⁰ The Genius of John Ruskin, edited by John David Rosenberg (Boston, 1963), p. 28.

¹¹ A recent comprehensive statement on The Broken Heart emphasizes its discordant meanings and effects. The author's approach most nearly coincides with my own, and I am pleased to acknowledge my indebtedness to him:

. . . In the world of The Broken Heart, there is a strong countercurrent which threatens to upset the balance of restraints imposed from within and without. The characters are troubled by thoughts of sickness and death, with frustration, compulsion, division. Images of secrecy, shadows and shrouding weave an atmosphere of moral density, and this is deepened by allusions to stealth and counterfeiting . . . In Ford's Sparta, there is a deep fissure between public standards and individual needs. Since the society allows too few constructive outlets for the passions, these are transformed into destructive energy; but, because the characters never question the premises of their culture, their destructiveness assumes the peculiarly Spartan form of self-deprivation. Ford's Spartans continually invoke the vocabulary of recognized virtues in order to repress the residual, unsocialized self.

. . . The Broken Heart . . . subscribes to a philosophy of manners, endorses a theory of obedience, and subsides finally into a condition of social entropy in which none of the major characters has an iota of latitude in the face of his vision of duty. The Broken Heart is a deontological argument; it is a tragedy of manners. . .

The principals, have already suffered the losses which prescribe their goals before the action begins. The past confiscates the present and denies normal evolutionary options to the principals. Self-reverence . . . displaces centrifugal

emotions. In the "tragedy of manners" no one "learns" anything, no new choices are made, no one "falls" in love, though many are shackled to old loves. We watch a world of characters who are sadder to be sure but not wiser. The limits of ethical value shrink to obedience to past imperatives. Suicide is the common denominator. The loci of allegiance are beyond the physical and temporal precincts of each character's realm of confidence. The mood is one of renunciation which becomes a positive virtue. Renunciation comprises not merely silent surrender of what one wanted or wants, but the destruction of anyone who might arguably gain possession of what one cannot have one's self. . . . (R. J. Kaufmann, "Ford's 'Wasteland': The Broken Heart," Renaissance Drama, III (new series), 1970, 178, 186-187).

Ford's story is basically original, with no readily identifiable source material (John Ford, The Broken Heart, edited by Brian Morris, New York, 1966, p. x), but the dramatist's insistence that "what may be here thought a fiction / . . . was known a truth" (Prologue, ll.15-16), has led some critics to search for analogies in history (Plutarch's Life of Lycurgus; the relationship of Sir Philip Sidney and Penelope Rich, to whom Ford's youthful elegy Fame's Memorial of 1606 is dedicated) and in literature (Sidney's Arcadia, Bandello's Novelle). There are, however, no definite clues. See Morris, pp. x-xi; Sturgess, p. 375; Stuart P. Sherman, "Stella and The Broken Heart," PMLA, XXIV (1909), 274-285; Giovanni M. Carsaniga, "The Truth" in John Ford's The Broken Heart," Comparative Literature, X (1958), 344-348).

12 Cf. Morris, p. xx: ". . . The tragic pattern is blurred, dissipated, and finally fragmentary. . . . The major characters are neither great nor little, there is no fall from great happiness to deep despair, because no great happiness has ever existed in the play. . . . The dominant feature is. . . . an infatuation or moral blindness, in which right and wrong, advantage and disadvantage are indistinguishable. . . . It is a world of immovable commitments which the characters have contracted for themselves, and the contracts issue in suffering and death. Experientially, the tragic effects of pity and fear are powerfully present, but the formal aspect of tragedy. . . . is muted and restrained. . . ."

13 For cogent discussion of this troublesome legal problem, see Glenn H. Blayney, "Convention, Plot, and Structure in The Broken Heart," Modern Philology, LVI (1958), 1-9.

14 I am aware that Ithocles expresses contrition for his sins several times in the play (II.ii, III.iii., IV.iv) but I think it important to note how little is accomplished by this, either to the satisfaction of Orgilus, Penthea, or anyone else.

15 These lines resemble Bosola's dying words in Webster's The Duchess of Malfi, V.v.93-104.

¹⁶ Clifford Leech (John Ford and the Drama of His Time, London, 1957) notes that ". . . the characters have within the play achieved a status beyond mutability. This is strengthened by a tendency to see them in abstract terms . . . Yet its hold on our minds is sufficient to make the characters more remote from a world of particulars, associating them and their tragedy with a plane on which abstractions can be imagined, giving to each, moreover, an immutable quality. . ." (p. 76). See also Robert Davril, Le Drame de John Ford (Paris, 1954), pp. 235-289.

¹⁷ MacDonald believes Calantha is the predominant character of the play, both morally and aesthetically: ". . . (Ford) raises her stature above that of the merely pathetic Penthea to that of a tragic heroine who has seen the revelation - and even the enactment - of all strength in her own final weakness. Calantha's actions are certainly meant to set those of all the other characters in a firm moral perspective, to indicate clearly their lesser nobility of action and of soul" (p. 328).

MacDonald's viewpoint raises a valid question, but the threadbare approach with which he pursues such questions as the nature of "pathos" vs. "tragedy," the relationship between strength and weakness as a representative element in the play, and what is meant by "a firm moral perspective" make his ideas seem arbitrary and polemical, unsupported by the facts of the play, in particular his lack of attention (even what might be dismissive and persuasive) to the nature of Penthea's suffering, her refusal to choose her affections over her marital obligations, and the true meaning of her suicide by starvation, a typically Spartan act (See Kaufmann, p. 177). Robert Reed (Bedlam on the Jacobean Stage, Cambridge, 1952) argues the opposite, but his discussion is even briefer and less persuasive: ". . . Of all Ford's characters, if not of all Jacobean characters, (Penthea) most commands the reader's sympathy . . . Her emotional frustration and subsequent apathy both of mind and of spirit are certainly more fully explained than those of any other frustrated person in Jacobean drama. . ." (pp. 144-145).

¹⁸ An ambiguity noted by Sturges, p. 377.

¹⁹ Except for Richardetto's appearance as a "doctor of physic" in 'Tis Pity and Roseilli's transformation into "fool" in Love's Sacrifice (plus conventional impersonations in masque scenes), there is no other use of disguise in Fordian tragedy and it is interesting to observe the dramatist arbitrarily and quickly discarding a device he presumably found unwieldy and unconvincing. "Aplotes," Orgilus' assumed name, means "simplicity" in the allegorization which Ford provides in the dramatis personae; to Euphranea, however, her disguised brother is a "lunatic" (I.iii.111) and nothing more. Both of these meanings assume ironic implications as the play progresses. Sturges' notes (pp. 379-380) are too sketchy to be of much use. Leech (p. 88) regards the device as one of several "clumsinesses in the contrivance of the action." Kaufmann (p. 180) explains the problem with more sympathy for the dramatist's attempt to make stage business, however short-lived, an expression of a

profoundly disturbed protagonist: ". . . (Orgilus') wounded nature is deeply divided against itself and without fully understanding this fact, Orgilus recognizes that he can no longer act effectively through his own person. In desperation he undertakes a series of disguises, therefore, to achieve some sort of artificial integration of his personality. . ."

20 Sturgess, p. 380.

21 Mark Stavig (John Ford and the Traditional Moral Order, Madison, 1968) notes a "confused synthesis of fatalism and free will" in Fernando, Giovanni and Orgilus (p. 214). Stavig goes on to remark: ". . . Ford's vision of life permits at once clear-sighted recognition of the forces in man that are destructive, laughter at and ridicule of the absurdities of man's behavior, and sympathy for the victims of life's tragedies" (p. 187).

22 Thus Ithocles believes Orgilus is honest, "a man of single meaning" (IV.1.14-15), but it is the process and implicit purpose of the play to reveal the mistake in such a judgment, and the reciprocal disaster such a perceptual blindness entails.

23 Cf. Kaufmann, p. 179: "Orgilus is a well-conditioned product of Spartan society in that, for him, contracts assume the validities of laws, which in turn acquire the status of literal facts . . . Since intense passion is not an approved emotion in this rational, restrained society, Orgilus camouflages his true emotions by doggedly reiterating his legal rights to his betrothed . . . By releasing him from further obligation to her, Penthea gives Orgilus a freedom which he is incapable of using. . ."

24 Ibid., pp. 181-182: ". . . (Orgilus') stogy murder of Ithocles. proves emotionally irrelevant. It utterly fails to satisfy him, and he cannot relinquish his role until he has successfully staged his own destruction . . . The murder is a form of spiritual castration . . . Although Orgilus implies a symbolic or subconscious awareness . . . in choosing to die by letting his own blood, the source of his passion, there is no larger recognition. Publicly he is still convinced of the justice of his revenge and, characteristically, he treats his death as a legal penalty rather than as a resolution of incompatible tensions . . . It is left to the audience to recognize the tragic nature of Orgilus' drive to narrow the terms of his life to the point where he destroys himself with apparent deliberation but with no clarifying vision. . ."

25 "Friendship" is another relationship invariably subverted in The Broken Heart, as underscored in Orgilus' feigned protestations to Ithocles and Bassanes, the two agents of his misfortune. Orgilus tries to "teach" Bassanes the "virtues" of "patience," "privacy," "silence," and "obedience" (V.1.48-55), but the "lesson," as the play reveals, is woefully misapplied by everyone from beginning to end and these otherwise paradigmatic qualities undergo a profoundly disturbing transforma-

tion into cunning, deceit, secrecy, the extremes of introversion and self-will - all produce a pervasive sense of hollowness and futility.

26 Cf. T. S. Eliot, Essays on Elizabethan Drama (New York, 1960): "Ford overstrains our pity and terror by calling upon us to sympathize now with Penthea, now with Calantha, now with Orgilus, now with Ithocles; and the recipe by which good and evil are mixed in the characters of Orgilus and Ithocles is one which renders them less sympathetic, rather than more human. . ." (p. 133). Morris (p. xii) believes that ". . . The Broken Heart is a play without a protagonist, built up of several plots, and populated with 'unfortunate' people. The multiplicity is organized to subserve an exploration of certain abnormal states of mind, certain peripheral situations, which meet, clash, and break upon one another. Ford's purpose in this play is to contemplate and anatomize humanity in some of its most egregious conditions."

27 Eliot (p. 134) believes Penthea "is throughout a dignified, consistent, and admirable figure," and Stavig (p. 158) observes that "we should admire Penthea's courage, pity her tragic plight, and excuse her irrationality."

28 At one crucial moment she denies this to Calantha: "Ithocles is ignorant / Of this pursuit" (III.vi.98-99), but Penthea's own intentions (III.iii.85-86), and his own expectations (V.i.57-58) confirm the opposite. A characteristic irony (given Ithocles' own feelings about "ambition") occurs when Penthea pleads his cause: "Impute not . . . to ambition. . ." (III.vi.79).

29 Even Bassanes' eventual insistence that she is after all a "chaste wife" (IV.ii.30, 63-64) cannot change Penthea's mind: "There is no peace left for a ravish'd wife / Widow'd by lawless marriage" (IV.ii.146-147).

30 Cf. Leech, p. 89: "The dramatic method employed in the scene does not quite cohere with the general manner of the play. . ."

31 ". . . Ford's indifference to public values, however, marks a further degree in the social conversion of tragedy. Above all, it marks the dissolution of tragedy as an art, since the poet has no objective standard of judgment remaining to check his liquefying emotions." (L.G. Salingar, "The Decline of Tragedy," The Age of Shakespeare, edited by Boris Ford, London, 1955, p. 438). As will be noted, the imagery of The Broken Heart sometimes suggests the related processes of melting, evaporation, a loss of form or shape.

32 M. Joan Sergeant, John Ford (Oxford, 1935), p. 145. Cf. Leech, p. 122: ". . . The effect is like that of great sculpture - an effect of nobility, of the arrest of time, and of a universal human significance. Ford's dramatic range was narrow, and he came to grief when

he ventured outside it. In contrivance he was often careless and perfunctory. His imaginative structures are fragile, and would not always be safe from mockery. But at his best - and in nearly every one of his plays he momentarily reaches his best - he dignifies not only human passion but the human condition."

33 The brief scene between Groneas, Memophil, Philemma and Christalla (I.ii.106-148) can be viewed as a comic parody of the more serious rituals which celebrate Ithocles' triumph and his initial encounter with Calantha, but this scene is really an undeveloped fragment which Ford would have done well to eliminate entirely from the play. "It is difficult to see why Ford arranged this clumsy piece of comic business," says Sturgess (p. 378), supported by Morris (p. xxviii).

That there is a characteristic difference of opinion as to Bassanes' function in the play should by now come as no surprise. Some critics see him as a residue of convention retained from an earlier comedy of "humours," particularly the urban farces of Jonson, Marston, and Middleton (McDonald, p. 156; Sturgess, p. 380; Morris, p. 91). Sturgess qualifies his one-dimensional view of Bassanes by stating that "the later Bassanes never escapes wholly from the earlier, temperamental failings (his stoicism is not entirely a true resistance of temptation but in part an indulgent cultivation of emotional asceticism)" (p. 391). Kaufman (p. 176) is more sympathetic to a naturalistic interpretation of Bassanes consistent with what is Ford's explicit thematic focus on human waste and isolation: "Whatever his faults, he is excluded painfully from Penthea's feelings, exiled and rejected by her self-absorption as surely as by his own disqualifications . . . He does not gain the partial remedy of a large dignity in the end. He is wedged so tightly into his self-constructed role that he is as lonely in his penitence as he had been in his jealous imaginings."

34 Morris (p. xxviii) observes that Bassanes, of all the major characters in the play, speaks the only colloquial language.

35 Phulas, Bassanes' servant, rightly notes (through the oblique commentary of a "wise" fool) "that whoever is found jealous, / Without apparent proof that's wife is wanton, / Shall be divorced" (II.i.57-59).

36 A rather idiosyncratic response which occurs several times in the play (III.iii.90; IV.ii.96-97).

37 Sturgess, p. 380.

38 Bassanes can always fabricate fornication in intimacies from which he is excluded, hence his blatant assertion of incest and "pan-dering" in the "whoreson court-case" of Ithocles and Penthea (II.ii.118, 122).

39 Thus Bassanes' further efforts at "reformation" are accompanied by Phulas' taunts: "Here's a rare change: / My lord, to cure the itch, is surely gelded; / The cuckold in conceit hath cast his horns" (IV.ii.12, 6-8). Sturgess (p. 385) believes Bassanes' attempts to appease his rage can best be explained by Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy, which regards such sudden alterations in behavior as characteristic of the jealous man.

40 Eliot, pp. 128-129.

41 Cf. Thelma Greenfield, "The Language of Process in Ford's The Broken Heart," PMLA, LXXXVII (May, 1972), 400: "Ford deals heavily in The Broken Heart with abrupt surprises and reversals and his language operates skillfully to enhance as well as to control such patterns." Prof. Greenfield's analysis is confined to syntactical, not metaphorical, structure; my intention is to show that imagery as well as grammar can act as a referent to the paradoxical vision of the play. Morris (pp. xxvii-xxviii) expresses a stronger preference for syntax over metaphor, and echoes and elaborates Eliot's reservations: "The language is remarkable for its lack of figures; its metaphors are seldom assertive. There is none of the virtuosity with language that is characteristic of so much of the writing of the Jacobean period. The true distinction is not between image and plain statement, but between periphrastic and direct utterance . . . There is a dazzle on the surface of words which blurs the edges of their meaning, and mediates a process of thought rather than the thought itself." The only critic who is willing to make a case for Ford's iterative imagery is Donald K. Anderson, Jr., "The Heart and the Banquet: Imagery in Ford's 'Tis Pity and The Broken Heart," Studies in English Literature, II (1962), 209-217.

42 Caroline Spurgeon, Shakespeare's Imagery and What it Tells Us, (New York and Cambridge, 1936), p. 213.

43 For a provocative exploration of this idea in Shakespeare (Julius Caesar) see Brents Stirling, Unity in Shakespearean Tragedy, (New York, 1956), pp. 40-54.

44 I have quoted from the Pelican edition of the play, edited by John E. Hankins (Baltimore, 1969). All citations are taken from this text.

45 Though he can sanction, as Ithocles urges, the marriage of his sister and Prophilus "with smooth eyes" (III.v.58).

46 T. S. Eliot, The Four Quartets, "Little Gidding," ll.208-209, (New York, 1943), p. 38.

47 As we have noted previously, Bassanes' recognizable trait is "sweating," usually as a sign of guilt or anger and "a burning Etna" is the only satisfying damnation for a man who must witness the slow death of his wife (IV.ii.95).

48 Juno was the goddess of wives, as well as the abortive victim of Ixion's advances, who by mistake coupled with a cloud and "begat centaurs" (IV.i.71). See Sturges, pp. 385, 387.

49 Quoted in F. E. Halliday, Shakespeare and His Critics (New York, 1965), p. 284.

50 Paul Bertrand, "Pure Music and Dramatic Music," Musical Quarterly, IX (1923), 545.

51 W. H. Auden, The Dyer's Hand (New York, 1962), pp. 500-527. Auden's perceptive method of explicating the complex function of Shakespeare's songs asks the right questions (p. 503) and has been most helpful in my own analysis of the songs in The Broken Heart and I am grateful in my debt to his lucid essay in clarifying my own opinions.

52 A distinction formulated by Langer, p. 148.

53 The sexual implications of the last line do not seem justified in the context of the particular scene or by any noticeable episode of the play, except as an ominous, ironic reminder of what the protagonists fail to achieve: "dying" becomes a surrogate for dying.

54 William Shakespeare, Sonnets, edited by Douglas Bush and Alfred Harbage (Baltimore, 1970), p. 28.

55 John Donne, The Elegies and the Songs and Sonnets, ed. Helen Gardner (Oxford, 1965), p. 61.

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